# TABLE OF CONTENTS - CHAPTER 5

**SHAH RUKH KHAN: BEYOND FILMS**

5.1 INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................................ 499

5.2 EXTRA-CINEMATIC ENGAGEMENT OF STARS: ITS SIGNIFICANCE .... 499

5.3 SHAH RUKH KHAN’S ENGAGEMENT IN ADVERTISEMENTS............. 510

5.3.1 Advertisements and the star system ................................................................. 510

5.3.2 Shah Rukh Khan: Advertiser’s model ......................................................... 514

5.3.3 Shah Rukh Khan: As a Masculine Sign as Constructed Within Gendered Advertising Texts ................................................................. 541

5.4 THE DISCOURSE OF ADVERTISEMENTS, GLOBAL CAPITALIST CULTURE AND ITS IDEOLOGY OF CONSUMERISM................................. 549

5.5 CHANGE IN CULTURAL ECONOMY OF FILMS - GLOBALIZATION AND ITS IMPACT DIASPORIZATION AND VISUAL CHANGES UNLEASHED AND THE INSTANCE OF THE STAR, SHAH RUKH KHAN .................. 553

5.6 REALITY SHOWS ON TELEVISIONS BY SHAH RUKH KHAN ............... 555

5.7 PUBLIC/PRIVATE PERFORMANCES AS STAR/PROFESSIONAL ENTERTAINER .............................................................................................................. 558

5.8 ENTREPRENEURSHIP VENTURES OF SHAH RUKH .............................. 560

5.9 SHAH RUKH’S ENGAGEMENT IN IPL - THE ‘INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE’ CRICKET ........................................................................................................... 562

5.10 THE STATE AND THE STAR: TRYST WITH BENGAL ......................... 576

5.11 THE STAR’S ENABLED AGENCY ........................................................................ 579

5.12 CONCLUSION ....................................................................................................... 594
CHAPTER 5

SHAH RUKH KHAN: BEYOND FILMS

5.1 INTRODUCTION
This chapter seeks to locate SRK beyond films in other media forms like advertisements, television and in various other entrepreneurial activities that enjoins him to a dense inter textual media ecology. The process of iconization reaches an apotheosis through the star’s imaging across various types of media texts, his near-ubiquitous presence in these texts featuring him and therefore allowing him to occupy a large part of the ‘mediasphere’ that allow him to remain in circulation even beyond his filmic presence. His casting in films is however, not discrete or disparate from the various commercial and propagandist deployment of his market driven ‘saleable’ star-image. It is rather a spillage of his aura and star-value into other media-texts. Unlike the two preceding chapters, this chapter is not limited to the star’s representation within the discourse of the text, viz. films, but proceeds to explore the star’s enabled agency and his empowered position by virtue of his stardom, popularity and marketability that accords him the privilege to self-deployment-ie, undertake commercial ventures to reap financial benefits of his own stardom through film production, ownership of private cricket league.

While many of the above said facts and practices are not unique to SRK, and pervades as prevalent ones as per capitalist logic of commodification of the star-image, the chapter locates him both illustratively of the larger celebrity culture and merchandising capitalist culture, while bringing to the fore certain unique choices and initiatives of the star, the specifics of his casting of the star in media-texts and how they all intersect with his real and reel biography.

5.2 EXTRA-CINEMATIC ENGAGEMENT OF STARS: ITS SIGNIFICANCE
Star aura and credulous viewing of otherwise fictional cinema produces a leakage between the cinematic and political democracy (as in voting behaviour) is further extendable to the larger public sphere of the extra-cinematic, Miriam Hansen differentiation of the diegesis and discourse as the two levels at which stars ‘work’ as an understanding of the star as a separate parallel commodity, Dyer’s notion of star image. (Srinivas 2009 p 136) correspond to the view of stardom as a composite whole constituted of star character, star persona and star image. While the first two components allow the star to coalesce with diegetic character and a certain typecasting
over a period of character acting the third component, i.e. the star image validates the presence of star charisma and star’s influence beyond cinema. This is the public domain that draws from cinematic persona and performance and disseminates this image within a mediated sphere for public consumption. ‘Star image the third moment of star production is a commodity manufactured and marketed by corporate players in the entertainment-media enterprise, it extends the evolving ambiguity between actor and enacted into the extra cinematic sphere the raw materials for this commodity are the physical attributes of the actor, his or her behaviours, and tastes in fashion, which are drawn on to create products and services that are marketed by a secondary network of celebrity media enterprises – fan magazines, newspapers gossip columns, celebrity radio, and television shows. These are coupled to the film industry in a web of mutual financial dependency. The tactics deployed are basic to cinema industries worldwide: organising public appearances and interviews with the star on broadcasting networks, mailing autographed photos of the star to fans, and marketing the star’s photographic image through a range of merchandise’. (Jacob, 2010 p 119-120).

Films stars today cannot help being cast by what Jacob calls. ‘The networks of subsidiary industries spawned by the cinema industry advertisements, publications, and other consumer goods that also helped to produce a continuum in the complex relationships between film fame, charisma and political fortunes’. (Jacob 2010 p. 188). The seamless flowing image of the star like SRK, is no longer containable within the sinews of filmic narrative and seeks an amplification in other spheres– either being cast as saleable commodity by “image-managers” of brands or by himself benefitting from his own “image” by utilizing its financial potential in his own business ventures like film production and IPL cricket league’s team ownership.

Scholarship on stardom allow us to acknowledge that star is not exclusive to film and is constituted within a larger cultural frame and its dynamics. Vijay Mishra’s view of Amitabh Bachchan as a ‘parallel text’ help us to take our conception of stardom beyond films in popular Hindi films. (see, Mishra, 2006 on Bachchan)The star text paradoxically is essentially a creation of filmic discourse, mostly films acting as vehicles of star performances. The films draw on images of the star in other films to give them roles as national icons of beauty and desire, presenting them as utopian beings. The circulation of this image in other media allows them to maintain visibility beyond the brief moment of performance and enables the creation of a star persona. Indian television is an ideal medium for this, screening the star’s earlier films, video clips of film songs and interviews. The star image is also perpetuated by the film and
lifestyle magazines which tell, or claim to tell, of their off screen exploits’ (Dwyer 2002 p 94)

The image building of star goes beyond diegetic scope and extra-filmic texts contribute to the same. These extra-cinematic text intersects with nation’s political and economic discourse and are veritable sources of nation’s social history, albeit unofficial. Observing the social political and historical relevance of extra cinematic texts on star’s multiple engagements, both private and public alike, Virdi comments: ‘We rely today on films to speak social history. But when the film texts are more or less formulaic, the sources and archival records must expand to include the social text beyond the film. Read against the parallel to films, star texts offer a wealth of information about cultural politics, particularly about a particular period – in this case, India’s post independence years. This methodological innovation responds to the exigency of the situation – the emptiness of official archives – and draws upon the domain of the popular to read the popular..... Print media purports to reveal the truth about the lives of the stars and it is shaped by its own conventions and suffers particular constraints. By company the codes that operate in different discourses – in the films themselves and the game of film reporting, which explores the topography of star lives – differences are revealed........ The parameters of the discursive practices in films and film magazines, ......change over time in response to other social and political influences......’ (Virdi 2003, p 137).

In this segment of my research. I do not seek to show the disjunctness of the extra cinematic sphere instead to examine the coalescence from the extra cinematic sphere, that is, the public arena outside the cinema industry where knowledge and information about cinema circulates in a range of media formats. (Jacob 2010 p 3)

Media convergence may be cited as one of the most important reason for which the extra-cinematic has acquired eminence and allowed for the amplification of the intratextual universe spilling beyond films. Unlike earlier stars whose fame and status was largely contingent on box-office return no longer is valid. (Bose 2006 p 30). The star images spills across in other spheres of the media and his/her engagement besides being lucrative for the media patrons and star himself/herself, allow the star-image to be exploited for profitable returns by media producers and companies and also expand the possibility for people to familiarise themselves with the star image independent of film viewing. Thus promotional tools from radio, to Internet, to print media are appropriating the cinematically devised charisma.

The star image beyond films, while often in continuity with the cinematic persona or in conjunction with the filmic performance with respect to mode of representation to
audience and means of access to them by audience is different. Unlike the conventional theatre bound spectatorship more attentive transfixed gaze and privileged viewership access to spectacle the extra-cinematic encounter communicated by other media mostly static images is more fleeting. (Jacob 2010 p. 228). Whether it is static or dynamic (advertising) or not, representations of stars in the larger public domain beyond films accord an ubiquity of the star’s presence and therefore to establish the iconicity of stars like Shah Rukh it is a near imperative to explore the extra filmic terrain where without consent, choice agency or volition of the people the star attracts our gaze and attention in myriad ways.

Extra-cinematic spectatorship is informed what Walter Benjamin described through the concept of the “distracted gaze”. This practice of “inattentive looking” generated by cinema is a condition of modern life. City dwellers, confronted daily by intense, shifting stimuli in their urban landscape, replete with a plethora of visual sites cultivate a mode of perception that is fed by quickly glances and rapid scans. The signs of cinema in their many forms, comprise a substantial proportion of the cultural debris, part of city’s modernity that is currently strewn across our world’s urban landscape. Discussions on the spectatorship of cinema must, therefore, consider the visualization and discourse of cinema outside the centuries of the theatre within the public spaces of the city. This includes advertisements in all formats, and the circulation of gossip about stars by word of month and through film magazines’. (Jacobs 2010 p 232). These glances are not without registering ubiquity insinuation into the fabric of our everyday living and privileges iconization. At the moment of elevation to iconicity, the image functions independently, describable by what David Marshall as cited by Jacob, observes when “the celebrity has actually entered the language of culture” and this suggests that a powerful visual image is more conducive towards achieving an iconic status in modern society. (ibid)

Such image construction is not limited within cinematic scope and it is in the larger public domain of the extra cinematic where we see how Shah Rukh’s image is not part of film or controlled by his agency above, it is part of everyday popular discourse. He has suppressed many of his contemporaries in “entering the language of culture “as commodity fetish as a popular youth totem as a success tale and so on. The entry of the star in the larger domain beyond films brings him close to everyday life and discursive practices, popular appropriations etc. And it is my argument that this language is the language of a middle class consumer culture, the language the affirms middle class beliefs around success, material accomplishment, familial/domestic happiness. Shah Rukh’s image beyond films have been constructed within the idiom of this language.
Jacob argues that the widely spread images of celebrities and political leaders is in agreement with the cultural and religious conventional where the ‘iconic’ divine is understood to be fluidly omnipresent and capable of multiple forms and locales of existence. ‘For the devout Hindu, the icon is an embodiment of the divine, not merely a visual representation. In fact, a wide range of interpretations of divine manifestation flourish under Hinduism’s emphasis on individual perceptions, its absence of formal organization and coercive power, and its lack of theological stricture. Such wide latitude for variation and modification, I argue, open a religious space that, in popular Hinduism, allows for a fluid apprehension of divinity in several registers. It is this opening, I contend, that propagates the godly aura that Indian film celebrities and political leaders cast so widely over their society’ (Jacob 2010 p 251) Jacob’s contention lead us to see how Shah Rukh’s multiple casting across films and beyond in several popular sites and registers allow to illustrate the ability to appear in plural incarnates or avatars. The iconicity, popularity and pervasive presence of the star is convincingly reinforced in wide range of extra cinematic space and engagement of the star within it.

The ubiquity and iconization of the star and the reproduction of Shah Rukh’s image within the visual domain, as may be argued is re-inforced and enabled through ‘mimetic conventionality’ ( see, Jain 2007, p 152). As films have already rendered him recognisable, renders him to be an always already valuable-as an icon already desirable and value invested (ibid p 152-153). The importance of the extra cinematic. I argue his in the fact that it negotiations with the pre-investedness of the star’s image and every such instance act as accretions to his image. These are presentations before the public gaze and each occasions add to the evolving publicness of the image. ‘The (pre) investedness of these symbols means that their every public instance.....takes on the capacity to form an incarnation : a seed crystal of actualization. The value (or devaluation) of an image is evidently linked to the extent to which its investment (or disinvestment) is performed within the public gaze ( see, Jain 2007 p 159) and this explains why stars like Shah Rukh already invested with signs of the commodity culture is easily transmuted in his commercial engagements beyond films. Advertisers perhaps find it easy to cast stars like Shah Rukh in ads he is already pre invested by consumerist idiom.

While conceding to the significance of extra cinematic and the fluidly mobile star signified in a wide range of extra concentrate spaces covering the public domain, it needs to added that how the ‘cinematic’ too has its expression beyond the space of both public and private exhibition. Bollywood as a cultural repertoire is mobilized variably in multiple sites through discursive practices. Bollywood is more of a style,
ensemble of signs, codes, meanings inscribed on other elements of our cultural lives like fashion, clothes, dance, music, food, decor etc. (Rajadhyaksha 2009 p 51-52)

The presence of Bollywood no longer contingent on revenue returns of films or its financers but on consumption of its wide range of cultural products that renders it independent of exhibition and its earnings. The translation of the ‘Bollywood phenomena into a cultural discourse no longer containable within diegetic limits but as site for discursive appropriations popular use and consumption. Bollywood as a separate popular culture domain beyond films and independent of statist control naturalizes the extra cinematic engagements of popular stars like Shah Rukh in advertisements private/public performances, sports etc.

With Bollywood, creating its own territory or a tradition of popular culture, drawing from films, and making incursions into areas beyond films like dance, music, food etc. lead to a permeation of Bollywood or “Bollywoodization”. This overwhelming Bollywoodized influence was more than often mediated through star bodies and star image or star presence act as veritable carriers of Bollywood Culture.

The translation of Bollywood films into other cultural spheres was enabled only through a proliferation of media outlets and avenues that disseminated it to various corners of the world. In other words as per Rajadhyaksha Bollywood is a ‘product of globalization’ (ibid p 70) Today, it is a producer of culture commodities of which film is only one and therefore the role that film plays is a key sub-set in its overall self definition’ (ibid p 83) Rajadhyaksha’s view of Bollywood as an assemblage of popular culture paradoxically dilutes the boundaries between cinematic and extra cinematic and stars effectively allow in diffusion of such boundaries through their multiple roles in films and beyond.

Rajadhyaksha’s argument find its resonance in Vasudevan’s view of film scholarship exploring richer possibilities of looking at the various component practices that surrounds film making. Vasudevan notes that film studies has started moving away from film spectator relationships to the vista opened by other realms of image and sound based entertainment. (Vasudevan 2010, p 11-12). Film making and various aspects of entertainment and aesthetic forms are conjoining to constitute the extra cinematic. Its primary function is to provide a launcluing pad, mis-en-scene and seductive allure to mobilize the spectators into a wide spectrum of consumer desire. Above all this cinema is subject to corporate investment, regulation and diversified investment profiles in an entirely novel way’ (ibid p 392-393). Cinema thus become a component in the larger commodity complex, it emerge as a culture institution by aligning with a consumer orientation and leads to an overall suborientation of the
cinema to wide spectrum of culture industries that has elaborated itself and is to be seen in large gamut of media constellation (ibid 397). Such a view makes cinema and other aspects of culture industries and popular entertainment a composite whole rendering it almost natural for star as a fluid signifier to straddle from one from to another media form within the larger constellation.

Bollywoodization is inextricably related to globalization. Globalization has been a great propeller of change in India’s history of media and entertainment. This opened up proliferating opportunities for Bollywood to popularize itself globally, as a cultural complex in forms beyond films. This expansive mode of Bollywood under the aegis of global capital and media convergence has opened up avenues for stars’ extra-cinematic performance in areas like television, sports, ads. etc. The post-global influx (and travel) of multinational capital and cultural apparatuses has had a visible effects of Bollywood. The regional avatars of syndicated television shows have involved Bollywood stars (Bhattacharya-Mehta, 2011 p 13). Shah Rukh for instance hosted ‘Kaun Banega Karorpati’ (an Indian vision of ‘Who wants to be a Millionaire’). The growth of post-global media in India argues Bhattacharya has been invariably connected to Bollywood in some form on the other (ibid p. 13).

In this turn towards Bollywoodization one can identify at least two movements which also implicates SRK. The first refers to film’s immersion in a media ecology that entails branding etc. and the other is an active cultivation of the overseas market. In either case the term Bollywood signals a shift from the object that was Bombay cinema – whether the shift implies a dispersal of the cinematic object and its assembling with other practices and commodities or whether we interpret the the term narrowly to refer to a film as a product directed towards overseas consumption that would also imply branding. And both these trends are epitomised in ‘K-Jo’ or Karan Johar films. These films turns the informal and inherent tendencies into capital and enjoyous in its stylized conventions an entertainment complex comprised of TV, stage shows, award ceremonies, fashion, video games, comic books and even university tours. Shah Rukh one of the most favoured stars of K-Jo films is, therefore, invested with visual and affective value of such branding this image and its easy association with codes and conventions of the K-Jo style allowed his image establish its branded value beyond films as an actor, performer, entertainer with a saleable presence and brand like value. Film inspired merchandise is irretrievably associated with star-body and its recall value in people’s memory. (Gopal,2011,p.18)

One of the challenges to the star aura ironically comes from its ubiquity, banality and over circulation that constitute as integral toiconization. Rajesh Khanna had once in a
prognostic statement said that ‘.....there can be no super star or mega star in times of
television and video’ Today stars like Shah Rukh and Aamir have entered our houses
via TV channels. As a result their magical aura have suffered as we are constantly
bombarded with images of stars.....This undermines their aura. Earlier people rushed to
see Amitabh Bachan’s 1st day 1st show, now people are not as for last six months they
are watching promos TV screen......the aura the mystery surrounding them no more
remains. (Anandolok 18/3/2000 p 28). It leads us to question if over exposed stars
engaged in several extra filmic engagements are losing their ‘star value’, their novelty
as people are gaining regular visual access to them.

Advertisements by glamorous popular stars poised as ‘consumer idols’ have gained an
extreme salience in post-liberalized India - in an economy and its liberal regime that
propogates in favour of aestheticization and consumption of the commodity. ‘A …
form of this transformation was experienced in metropolitan centres, where
 technological changes and the flush of commodity culture turned city centres into
spaces of rapid and accelerated forms of sensory stimuli. The mythic dream of a future
utopia was created through architechtural forms and advertising methods that enabled
the circulation of the commodity form as a visual sign… Visual intoxication, seduction,
desire for the good life, and fantasy have been powerful themes in the new experience
of space and time felt by many after globalization in South Asia. Architectures and
design have together provided the expressive vehicle for this transformation which is
captured both in the physical transformation of cities and in cinema. The link between
consumption and the aestheticization of urban space has
been explored by several scholars… In India, the recent rise of multiplexes and
refurbished movie theaters, the emergence of shopping malls, coffee shops, ATMs, and
electric advertisements/billboards across the prime districts of many … cities has
The readiness of the middle class society to aspire and favour consumerist pleasure and
provide a consumerist gloss to to itself provide a conducive moment for stars to
endorse products in ad campaigns. The flush of consumption, global mobility,
circulation of mediated visual signage through global media network create new desires
and aspirations to which ads appeal through interpellative power mediated by stars.
As already stated that one of the greatest attraction for contemporary stars in exploring
their popularity in extra cinematic ventures is the primary benefits accrued. Besides
films, stars earn in crores from assignments that range from performance in private
occasions to ads to TV shows. Unlike earlier stars who had single source of earning,
contemporary stars earnings. Reporting on their multiple earnings and its lavish amount, a magazine reports ‘.....The power and magic of wealth is such that Bollywood stars like Shah Rukh, Salman Khan, Karishma, Madhuri, Akshay Kumar agrees to attend rich man’s son’s or daughter’s wedding and agents of Bollywood have fixed rates for it-from Rs. 50,000 to 2 core rupees. Oney is accepted either as cash deposited in foreign banks or in hand, for e.g. a lavish bungalow to evade paying tax to the Govt.....Interestingly among top ten earners of film world, there is no actor/actresses in first top three positions. Shah Rukh occupies the forth position. Among actors he is number one. In each film he charges 4 to 6 crore. It may be stated that Amitabah charged Rs. 35 lac for every film. Dilip Kumar 25 lacs, Jeetendra 22 lac, Rajesh Khanna Rs. 20 lac and Dharmendra Rs. 12 lac. This allow us to infer that in the last two decades inflow of money has multiplied. Besides Shah Rukh earns from endorsements handsomely, comporquing for brands like Pepsi, Omega, Bagpiper. Top Raman etc. For every private appearance SSK’s rate is Rs. 50 lac. Besides from overseas stage shows his performance charge is approximately Rs. 2 crore, i.e. nearly his earning reach Rs. 24 crore per year......this success can be gauged from his high earnings. Recently, he has started a new strategy viz. While signing for film he is acquiring overseas rights as his remuneration.....the capitalises on his success and popularity and keeping them as his stakes he takes up these ventures’. (Anandolok 22/1/2000 p. 14-17).

Exploring several avatars from advertisements to television live shows to sports besides films, SRK has established himself as both a businessman and as an ‘entertainment brand’ himself.

Bolywood as an economic sphere of activity and a popular site of culture which is open to market forces, signals what according to Jameson signals as a commercialized, commodified postmodern culture. The liberalization of the state concomitantly led to the undermining of the much vaunted elitist modernism upheld within confined enclaves of art culture and aesthetic and in films are neorealism. Hindi commercial cinema came to be seen in new light and as certainties of high modernism held under state auspices came to lose its rigour, Hindi films and its popular culture have announced the arrival of a certain kind of postmodern sensibility. The prodigious expansion of films into an assemblage of commodity culture a commodified visuality. Hindi films and its cultural economy steeped within a consumer capitalism and replicates and reproduces it. In Jamesonian respective the Bollywoodization of popular culture and its proliferating commodity culture illustrates the integration of aesthetic production into commmodification and commodity production. Culture is no longer an ideological disguise for activities of capitalist society, but is an economic activity itself as
understood from the range of magazines, merchandise, fashion, accessories, music, dance beyond films constitute the Bollywoodized cultural repertoire with a vast saleability and a wide influence (see Jameson as cited in Storey 2003 P65).

Popular culture and its semantics are gaining new relevance when being produced with people’s active consent and circulated in public by active makes and consumers, contemporary popular cultural objects are mainly commodities produced and circulated for financial valorization through exchange and consumption. That it is no more confined to popular culture. “High” cultural objects are also caught up in the process of capital accumulation. And of special interest is the post modern interaction of forms and meanings across once heavily policed borders of cultural value and politics, the complex relations between symbolic and material configurations at national, global and local levels. Old socio cultural distinctions and hierchies though have not disappeared but are becoming less important. Under these circumstances there will be a rediscovery of popular. In this syncretic world of postmodern culture, nothing is sacrosanct; no boundary either hierarchial or spatical is forever fixed (Mc Guigan 1992 P 83-84).

The commodity form of the popular is best exemplified in the Bollywoodized ensemble of cultural products and the influence of its aesthetics in everyday life like in home décor fashion cometics music private celebrations and festivities has created a cultural repertoire that seeks to revise hierarchies of culture high and low mass and elite etc. Bollywood culture permeating our everyday life allow us to see the extra cinematic ramifications of Bollywoodized influence beyond films. The eruption of the boundaries allows this popular filmic culture to coalesce with our everyday life. This naturalizes the engagement of stars beyond films as Bollywoodized culture is no longer confined to cinematic frames. It is an ethnographic component present in our daily lives. Fans and people knowingly and unknowingly consume popular culture and the artifacts and reconstitute them in their own lives and imagination. This whole domain of a Bollywoodized culture complex that spills beyond films exhibits what Hermes calls as the citizenship qualities of popular culture (Hermes 2005 p.3) Partaking in this democratized space of popular domain stretches far beyond national boundaries. The semiotic material of this popular cuolture is open to discursive reading practices, appropriations etc. and this enables formation of a Bollywoodized cultural citizenship by sheer outflow of cinematic culture into extra-cinematic realms.

Stars like Shah Rukh’s influence draws from the visual cultural complex of Bollywood and vice versa Hindi cinema has an existence beyond the screen in its all pervasive kitsch visual culture that permeates every aspect of our life and culture and has acquired an extra filmic ubiquity (Dwyer and Patel 2002 p 8). It is this visual culture
that secures a near continuity for stars extra cinematic engagements like public performance, advertisements music videos fashion parades etc. This visuality, it may be argued is for Bollywood is not the Indian film industry or at least not the film industry alone. Bollywood admittedly occupies a space analogous to the film industry but might be seen as a more diffuse cultural conglomerate involving a range of distribution and consumption activities. (Rajadhyaksha 2007 p 451). The stardom of Shah Rukh is caught with this cultural conglomerate of Bollywood in myriad forms of media texts and star presence.

What also needs to be stated that Shah Rukh’s popularity amongst a large constituency while encouraging both the star and the market to deploy his marketable value beyond films has given him a certain ubiquity across a wide textual universe of media. This has also ascribed a certain banality or blandness to the stardom (see Cowen 2002 p.107).

The extra cinematic engagement of superstars have gained an eminence more so far allowing stars to remain in circulation even when their films often successively, fail at the box office. The mercurial superstar phenomenom marked by a sheer transience and mutability is perhaps now becoming a thing of the past and present day stars are responding to plural opportunities in the business of entertainment and commerce as with Shah Rukh and many others. A superstar is a by product of his times as direction. Mahesh Bhatt explains “Since time immemorial every society has created its heroes to escape the becoming curse of mortality. Every human being has always tuned to cope with the impending feeling that things will come to an end. A superstar is nothing but a by-product of the same yearning to live in people’s minds forever even as his physical body withers away (as cited in Sunday Times of India, The superstar Phenomenon article by Haimanta Mukherjee 29 July, 2012). The above cited article alerts us to the transience of stardom. Indian cinema does offer quite a long span of stardom for heroes Shah Rukh Khan and Salman Khan the two superstars of his generation may have dominated the screen for almost two decades, but their stardom also has an expiry date. It’s like the law of gravity. It is perhaps to avoid this fall, the contemporary stars are keen to explore commercial ventures beyond films both to remain in public memory and ensure financial security against odds to sustain their starry lives.

Major intellectual challenges over early part of 20th century and theoretical contention of post-structuralism and post-modernism have dislodged stable, fixed and coherent notions of identity. Identity is something constructed and always in a process of becoming and is never complete as believed by Stuart Hall. Identities are mobile and multiple and therefore entails a form of production. Although identities are clearly
about and who what we think we are and where we think we came from but also where we are going. Identities are always a narrative of the self becoming (Storey 2003, p. 79). The star seen from the perspective can have multiple identities and each of his identities ranging from being an actor-entertainer, to a brand’s model to a film and entertainment business entrepreneur has an appropriate mode and context of articulation, that is depending on context our identities form particular hierarchies (ibid). While in a particular context a certain identity becomes dominant it does not preclude other dominant identities which are always present, waiting, ready to play a part in the changing formation of the self (ibid). This allow us to appreciate that when the star is an advertisement it is his identity as a celebrity with a desirable status fame and credibility that becomes dominant over the rest. On the cricket field he is the franchise owner of IPL team ‘Kolkata Knight Riders’ that has a precedence over the rest. The identity of the star however is posited within discourses that both enable and constrain it. The identity formation of the star in the light of the above arguments as Storey suggests consist of a negotiation between autobiographical and biographical material i.e. what the star believe to be and how he is represented by significant others that includes the media popular culture public domain etc. Extra-cinematic engagements are therefore illustrative of the multiple roles of the star beyond film and how he is discursively located within these plural spheres.

5.3 SHAH RUKH KHAN’S ENGAGEMENT IN ADVERTISEMENTS

5.3.1 Advertisements and the star system
Stars are saleable as commodities as images within media texts and the wisdom to deploy stars in advertisements is purely driven by market logic. This view upholds film as capitalist production wherein stars are to be seen in terms of their function in the film economy, including their role in manipulating both film market as well audience. This does not preclude the view that examines star phenomenon in terms of intrinsic property of film as a medium of star having a magic charm. But whatever it may be looking at Hollywood history, stars from the very beginning were valued elements of film production in terms of capital, investment, outlay and market. Dyer, discussed their relevance to Hollywood economics in terms of capital, investment, outlay and market. Hortense Powdermaker, in her ‘anthropological investigation’ of Hollywood. ‘The Dream Factory’ sums this up: ‘From a business point of view, there are many advantages in the star system. The star has tangible features which can be advertised and marketed - a face a body, a pair of legs, a voice, a certain kind of personality, real or synthetic - … The system provides a formula easy to understand, which can be
advertised and sold, and which not only they, but also banks an exhibitors, regard as insurance for large profits...(as cited in Dyer, 1979, ibid.p.11)

This trend is reinforced through a visual celebrity culture and its replication in post-liberalization India is significant. It is the consumer market that benefits greatly from the saleability of stars and the present engagement of stars in ads. is not going to be a short lived phenomena. As people’s interest in commodity products in growing and brands are engaged in fierce competition to attain consumer’s interest most companies are in … of faces, persons, images to build their brands, whose credibility, charisma and trust worthiness can promote the product (Anandolok.p.33-34; 29/4/2000).

In psychoanalytic terms, derived from original formulation by Lacan, Hearn’s understanding of identification with ‘Imaginary symbolic : illustrates how identification is enabled via consumption of images. The star appeal is suitably deployed in advertisements campaigns and publicity audio visual material in a bid to address the desires of actual and potential consumers

In its original formulation by Lacan the mirror phase marks the inauguration of the Imaginary as the infant (a non-subject) perceives, identifies and merges with the image: either its specular like or the real presence of an/other which provides fiction of bodily unity and autonomy. The constitution of proper subjectivity is affected when child takes its place in language of the symbolic order. Where the representation of self necessitates the recognition of difference - viz, the other. It is with the repression of imaginary plentitude - the infantile absorption into the other that the subject is fractured into lack. While the symbolic order calls for an essential fixity of self, the legacy of the Imaginary remain in flux of desire and want of the other. It is here that psychoanalytic account of subjectivity provides a particular approach to film, music, fashion as the privileged space of imagination. Where the cultural ordering of difference and identity is eclipsed by the “image” as a regain visual access to the last subject where the self slides into the other.

The psychoanalytic motion of identity which represents the de centred subject as an effect of identification finds its tangible expression in the philosophy of modern fashion which by constructs and market itself through consumption of the “image” and the “look” (Hearn et al. 1992, p.228-229).

The deployment of popular stars in endorsements allow their “look” and image to be consumed. Shah Rukh stars alike act as the Imaginary other into which he de centred subjects self slides into and construct their identity through consumption of their image.
The visual means or spectacle, viz. the star offering pleasure of consumption good living etc. help to gain access to desired/lost object.

Here, Shah Rukh’s role and his star power as a vehicle of fashion, lifestyle and consumption may be discussed especially in the light of Simmel’s understanding on fashion, and extend the idea of fashion to envisage a broader consumer choice inspired by star-power. In his writing on the ‘Philosophy of Fashion’. Simmel maintained a similar line of analysis that revolved around issues of modernity and identity. Simmel argued that codes of fashion are arbitrary and respond to cultural codes instead of practical once. Hemlines and colour make little difference to our survival chances - their primary function is social, not material. He argues that fashion is a response to our desire to modulate the tension between the expression of individual self and belonging to a larger collectivity. The success of fashion as an institution arises from its unique ability to fulfill both simultaneously. On the one hand people can imitate others and thus how the psychological security of being members of a collectivity. On the other they can use it to express their individuality, perhaps by only subtle adjustments to a given style. (Smith. 2001, p.20)

The deployment of star power is arguably premised on the wisdom of companies to use the appeal of stars like Shah Rukh Khan to attract identification with his charm charismatic appeal fame and also use his endorsement to sanctify their choice for the fashion object. The desire to imitate and forge easy identification to a popular and famous star ad his ‘approval’ of a produce reassures them of their choice, taste and fulfils their desire of being acceptable to a collectivity.

Simmel also notes that fashion play a role in the statisficate on system and tends to exist only in societies that are highly stratified. “fashions … a product of class division ad operates … the double function of holding a given circle together and at the same tiem closing it from others”. In responds to the needs of high status groups to symbolize their difference those of lower status, and allows those of lower status groups to make claims to higher status. The image Simmel presents is here of consumer goods and cultural tastes being used as a marker of distinction. (ibid. p.20). It may be argued that consumer goods in advertising campaigns reinforce this status distinction on further through star endorsement. A fashionably dressed Bollywood star, who is known to be popular. Successful maternally accomplished acting as a vehicle of fashion, lifestyle and consumption enhances the product value and its worthiness as a status symbol for both the … and allures those who aspires for mobility.
The logic of capital to deploy stars and apply them as vehicles of consumption parallels what Marx called as “false consciousness”. Extending the cinematic appeal and charm to advertisements, starry images create illusions around consumption and consumerist choice and practices. Herbert Marcuse provided seminal exposition in his text, ‘One Divisional Man’. The book suggested that consumurism was an insidious force and alleged that people had been seduced by commodities and comfort. They were content in their material affluence and happy to wallow in the false freedoms provided by leisure domesticity and sexual opportunities. Subjectivities, Marcuse asserted, had been shaped by the needs of the capitalist system. Rather than attaining the “true” perspective afforded by critical reason, the one-dimensional man was a shallow person living an illusory life, voluntarily seeking to fulfill false needs. Marcuse writes, as cited that “Most of the prevailing need to relax, have fun, to behave and consume in accordance with the advertisements, to love and hate what others love and hate, belong to this category of false needs” (Smith, P. 2001. p. 206).

Star power successfully creates false needs and seduces people towards consumerist pleasure. The illusory pleasure of consumption is well mediated, well conveyed and well convinced via popular stars like Shah Rukh in publicity campaigns and brand endorsements.

Another aspect of identification with star bring to fore affirmation of a particular lifestyle and leisure that star mediates a global consumerist identity by rendering himself as a referential anchorage. Advertisement illustrates how much multinational corporations have learned from Barthes that do not connote merely film references but a definite lifestyle. Modern multinationals increasingly use adverts to position their commodities in particular lifestyles. Connecting with this lifestyle in appeals that are subtle, penetrating and works at the subliminal level advert show how signs in global culture are disembodied from their spatial and chronological positions to construct a global form of identity is based on recognition, the shared ability to decipher representational codes and is a mark of individualism rather than identifying with the masses. (Rojek 2007, p.57)

The identification invited by the star acting as a consumer himself is that of a consumer only. As a purveyor of a global firm of identity, stars like Shah Rukh acts as a model to affirm identification with a global consumerist identity. This media driven consumerist culture takes advantage of what Rojek calls as ‘the inspiration deficit in contemporary life, as million of people appear to want to be ‘filled’ with lives of the famous and glamorous (ibid. p. 72).
The Star acts as mediator, who translates and transforms the idiom of modern Westernized consumption. ‘… modernity as plural, we see that it is not so much adopted, as adapted, re-created and transformed by a range of influences according to the needs of culture and place’. (Ashcroft. 2012. p4) Cultures are not necessarily engulfed by modernity, but creatively transform it to local need. Gaonkar as cited by Ashcroft argues ‘Creative adaptation is not simply a matter of adjusting the form or recording the practice to soften the impact of modernity, rather… it is the site where a people ‘make’ themselves现代, as opposed to being ‘made’ modern by alien and impersonal forces, and where they give themselves an identity and a destiny’ (ibid. p.7)

As Indian consumer markets are stocking foreign brands, endorsement by popular and well-known star and celebrity like Shah Rukh, Amitabh Bachchan and even sports stars like Sachin Tendulkar lend their images to recode consumption practices. Identification with such known faces with their fame. Status and success enhancing their credibility in the public domain allow consumers to re-work their consumption practices with stars becoming the medium of creature translation.

The logic of deploying stars mostly explicated through Western theoretical positions also has its indigenous, historical parallels. According to Kajri Jain ‘… a generic devotional Hinduism was also expressing itself in other areas of the early culture industry such as printed images which came to be circulated across the country by picture merchants from trading communities working within the networks of the bazaar … Calendar images maintain the bazaar’s moral commercial index of piety, publicly rein scribing a company’s name for its customers every year within the auspicious context of a pleasing and/or iconographically correct image … the efficacy of mimetic representation is harnessed to the perception of the other, by way of the realm of reputation, honour (“name”, “face”) and credit worthiness. These qualities are central indices of viable participation in the ethics of the bazaar. In the merchant’s … maintain its value and currency; it was essential that this name did not appear in anything but a proper light’ (Jain, 2007. p. 160-161).

While calendar art depicting images of god served to maintain credit worthiness among customer in favour of bazaar’s trading communities, where deity’s mimetic representation is mobilized to maintain customer’s faith, the present day rationale to deploy star is not too dissimilar. Stars as secular gods, sacralized icons, idols of consumption provide an appropriate image for transference of trust. This trust worthiness and credibility it can be argued is not unrelated to his/her popularity fame and success.

5.3.2 Shah Rukh Khan: Advertiser’s model
Economic liberalization from the early 1990s could very well be treated as the opening moments of India’s new consumption patterns and cultural globalization. Economic liberalization, which included reduction of import duties, the entry of private industry into what used to be state controlled domains, the modification of banking sector, entry of foreign products and compare and rise of newer service sector were some of chief aspects of the liberalization policy. India’s fast moving consumer goods (FMCGs) sector is the fourth largest sector in the economy with a total market size in excess of us$ 13.1 billion. India topped the 2006. At Kearmey Global Retail Development Index, indicating sharp rise in spending on summer durables, apparel, entertainment, vacations and lifestyle products…India is at the top of the consumer confidence index for the fourth time in a row…The Indian directory at describes India as a shapper’s paradise and declares the whole country is shopping mall…while these are not fullproof modes of ganging consumer behavior, they certainly provide some idea of the increasing significance of shopping and consumption for Indians’.(Nayar 2008 p119).

Consumption is fuelled by the growing market economy and has emerged as a process as a product and a consequence of lifestyle and media(ads) discourse, practice of actual shopping and visiting malls and imagination, fantasy or desire for consumer items (ibid p 120). The successful permeation of such a consumerist culture owes largely to the propagandist means or advertisements that encourage both desire and practices of consumption. Consumer companies working for popular faces with credible public image that can easily draw people’s attention have used celebrities to forge a assurable truly with the product.

In 1989, Shah Rukh did a commercial for Liberty shoes, which featured him running, at the crack of dawn and was paid only three thousand out of a total budget of rupees sixty thousand. He was a struggling T.V. actor, but ads continued to be part of his ouvre even after he joined films and became a star. His success in films allowed him to position himself as a both expensive and one of the preferred celebrity endorser, and although contract negotiations are kept secret, trade gossips were amog with news that the star earns something between 40 million to 100 million rupees for each endorsement and was one of the highest – paid and favoured endorsers along with cricketer Sachin Tendulkar and veteran super star actor of Bollywood Amitabh Bachchan.(Chopra,2007,p.157) ‘In 2003, Tag Heur watches launched a campaign with Shah Rukh. By 2005, the company had notched a 60 per cent annual growth – management said they had ‘overachieved’ their targets. A leading monitoring firm….tabulated that between 1994 and 2006, Shah Rukh appeared in 281 print ads and
172 television commercials. In 2005 alone, he endorsed approximately 34 different products. Shah Rukh was the ubiquitous symbol and conduit of the new consumerist society (ibid. p. 160)

Shah Rukh Khan as a popular star acts as one of the most ‘preferred model’ for ads, going by the sheer number of ads that engage him. His regular deployment is attributable to the fact that advertisements which experiment with the semantic order-are accompanied by a stable set of associations. (Cauldry, 2000, p. 83). Acting as a model well-known face within a dense textual universe, he is capable of mediating such a stable set of associations in consonance, in products that range from hair oil (Himani) to cars and even men’s inner wears. People actively negotiate within this textual universe, screening material and making more explicit and considered choice about other material. Different textual maps are produced differentially by people engaged in constant negotiation, mapping and remapping from the textual universe depending on their resources and access to the same. Here issues of power, differential cultural resources and entitlements emerge clearly (ibid. p. 84)

Shah Rukh’s active and nearly wide and ubiquitous presence in the endorsement of a wide range of consumer items allow him to be reproduced in the dense textual universe.

It allow people to consume his image in multiple media both actively and passing depending on how they map their textual environment and negotiate with their cultural resources depending on their position in terms of class, status gender and other socio-cultural affinities. The Star-mediated images and its semantics are unevenly distributed and differentially received based on their gender class specific choices, tastes and preferences. The meanings conveyed by the star for different products ranging from modest toothpaste, men’s fairness cream, herbal hair oil to high end expensive products like cars (Hyundai), watches (Tag Heur). lifestyle products (Décor), beverages (Royal Blend) etc. produce differential meaning and reception. The meanings conveyed in different endorsements, can recreate asymmetries and re-produce inequalities based on socio-economic position. It also influences the cultural inventory of stardom differently that what was prior to their active engagement as purveyors of market capitalism and commodity culture.

Promoting a kind of ‘consumer activism’ (Rojek. 2007. p. 71). Shah Rukhs and the role of celebrities in endorsing a large range of consumption items, rendered available through growing free markets, liberal economic regime and rising living standards of the middle class, is to seduce actual and potential consumers towards greater consumption indulgence. The metaphoric transfer of fame, glamour and credibility of
the star/celebrity convinces buyers. The deployment of stars like Shah Rukh in endorsements, as a purveyor of global consumerism, sees how like in films also within advertisements his image and popularity seeks to bring the global closer home in the everyday practices and rituals of consumption. Shah Rukh’s representation as the ‘brand ambassador’ and emblematic face of global brands can be cast in Althusserian framework of interpellation. Through branding multinationals interpellate (call forth/summon) particular models of consumer identity into which consumers are positioned and which shape onlocation practice. (Rojek, 2007 ibid. p. 96). Stars, like Shah Rukh acting as emissaries of global consumerism, endorsing global consumer brands ‘voice’ the interpellative power of multinational companies. As the nation-state’s hegemony in constituting national subject are challenged by this, it can be argued that celebrities in post-liberalization going India are tacitly deployed to produce post-national subjects and consumer identities. Therefore, star-power appeals to the pleasure-driven, indulgent sensibilities and preferences of the individual consumer, beyond the frame of political/national identity. As Rojek further states: ‘We know from examining cultural studies in the moment of the National Popular that the state interpellates through control of the law, the police, social work, education and public propaganda. For multinationals, the primary mechanisms are marketing and advertising. These business are not simply engaged in selling products to consumers, they are offering a liberation culture and progressive lifestyle…” (ibid. p. 119).

‘A particular insidious facet of consumer culture is the inherent claim that ‘we’ are not good enough as we are, but require to be enhanced in some way by commodities. We are not even asked to believe the argument that one washing powder cleans better than another; rather, we are enchanted by the feeling associated with key signs that happiness is at hand, if only…” (Barker 2002 p. 173). It is this given sense of ‘lack’ which gets best addressed through popular, and successful and accomplished celebrities with a promise to fill in the lack. Shah Rukh’s cinematic image that has achieved a close association with globality hybridity, urbanity and cosmopolitanism gets best utilized in endorsement. This image of consumption comes to represent consumerism in a liberalized ‘post-scarcity’ cultural enclaves of India, as the Lacanian symbolic imaginary other inviting identification.

SRK’s casting located within the problematic of ideology and hegemony of global consumer culture is amply evident via a textual and ideological analysis of the texts deploying him, emphasizing not only on selling of commodities but also of looking at the world. The job of advertising was to create an ‘identity’ for a product amid the bombardment of competing images by associating the desirable human values.
Acquiring a brand was not simply about purchasing a product; ‘rather it was also concerned with buying into lifestyles and values.’ (Barker, 2002. p.165). The identity of the product is built through deployment of star-image that serves to affirm a particular lifestyle or values. The star’s image is associated with a particular living devoting success, pleasure, wealth comfort, fame, desirable looks and so on. Shah Rukh seen to endorse a wide variety of products is appropriately posed to deliver and transfer from his own image the values associated with the product. In men’s inner wear (Onn by Lux Cozi) he exhibits a desirable male body - an idealized corporal profile to attract young males, in adverts of regular home-products like toothpast (Pepsodent), biscuits (Sunfeast) he poses as a doting and caring parent (father) connoting ‘family values’, in adverts of electronic gadgets (Videocon); mobile phones (Nokia) or cars (Hyundai) he displays a smart, knowlegable techno savvy, affluent man who can not only buy but is equally able to make an informed and intelligent choice. This efficiency and competency are associated values of products he endorses. The products virtues seeks a mediation through the star-image, otherwise valued for his credibility, success and most importantly wide popularity and wide recognisability. Barker, citing Williamson, holds that objects in advertisement are signatories of meaning that we decode in the context of known cultural systems associating products in adverts with other cultural ‘goods’. In buying commodities, we emotionally invest in the associated image and so contribute to the constitution of our identities through consumption. Such identity construction is build through easy identification forged through popular star images. The star image is utilized to mediate cultural ‘goods’ and values associated with the product and by endorsing consumption of the advertised commodity it invests in the product or brand a certain value and prestige and meaning to its consumption, through a metaphorical transfer from his own celebrated biographical image of success and affluence as a star. In the postmodernist sense SRK therefore emerges as what can be suggested as a sign-value, whose aura and glamour in advertising texts has replaced the use value or exchange value of commodities through the exchange of symbolic meanings. That is, commodities within these texts become sign-value that confers prestige and signifies social value. Status and power. In the Baudrillardian sense, a commodity is not an object with use-value but a commodity sign (Barker 2002; p.165). The economic logic of late capitalism exploits the symbolic value of celebrities. The sign-value of the star, his fame, prestige, status is associated with the product. The product acquires a sign value, a symbolic meaning and becomes commodity - sign valued for its symbolic worth beyond its utilitarian worth. In the consumer society of late capitalism everyone is a consumer. Consumption is the only means of obtaining
life resources, both material and cultural. All material functional resources are inibricated within the semiotic-cultural. A car is not just a transport, but a speech act, etc. All the commodities of late capitalism ‘are goods to speak with’ to twist a Levi Stranssian pharse. The meanings we speak with our bodies are much directed and distributed by the agencies of social power as those of television or of the catalogue from which we furnish our homes(Fiske 1989 p34-35). Ads of products through material are semiotically charged with meanings which is in a symbiotic exchange transposed on to the star persona and the star mediates or conveys the same to us. The star body is the semiotic signifier that speaks for the product. The very star presence is communicative of product’s value and worth.

The fluidity and variability of his portrayal in a wide-range of textual discourse of ads-ranging from a doting father (of Papuu’s Papa in Pepsodent tooth paste ad) to the muscle flexing hyper masculine posturing( in ads of TMT-Bar) affirms Shah Rukh’s popular image as a cultural commodity and how this is ‘reflexively oriented towards the markets, towards a variegated and changing public taste that it also helps shapes two of its most striking features, viz. its prolixity and malleability’ (Davis. 2007. p. 16). Shah Rukh’s popularity as a youthful, hybrid, urbane, cosmopolitan star is valued by the commodity constellation to target youth in a bid to promote their products. Apart from endorsing regular household items Shah Rukh is seen in advertisements featuring life style based products popular among the younger population. As, Barker argues: ‘…the emergence of brands like Nike, Levi, Playstation, Coca-Cola and MTV in tandem with the promotion of international Pop Stars represents the commodification and subsequent homogenization of youth culture. ( Barker ibid. p.146). Addressing the youth and catering to their lifestyle demands and choices in various product like watches (Tag Heur) cars (Santro and i-10 Hyundai), mobile phones (Nokia) etc which are mostly global brands Shah Rukh’s image finds a wide circulation with global space of consumer culture. As capitalist market has appropriated commodified and circulated youth culture and reproduced them in myriad products that has an appeal to a diverse range of consumers, they find it particularly favourable to deploy stars like Shah Rukh who ideally with his looks body and filmic image retains an youth fullness. This allows advertisers to commodify the star to market products for it is deliberately targeted towards the middle youth (Brooks 2003 p 2).

According to several manufacurers such as Sony, Lego, Nokia and Swatch, the emphasis on various items are designed for the entertainment of ‘Kidutts’ – especially accessories usually associated with young people such as fashionable watches, mobile phones (ibid p 3). As there is a recognizable body of adult consumers who want to
surround themselves with products that advance and maintain the illusion of youth (ibid p 3) it may be argued how Shah Rukh’s middle youth image is suitable harnessed to appeal to matured age aspiring for a certain youthfulness. Identification with SRK as an idol facilitate such image negotiation for the middle youth category. Shah Rukh’s recurrent casting in films since DDLJ as what can be called as a youthful lover render him acknowledged as a legitimate subject where he is simply in his performing youth for the consumption of the audience (ibid p 10).

Shah Rukh’s romantic youthful filmic image, his off screen youthful exhuberance enable him to emerge as an youth icon in a consumerist society that seeks to blur the distinction of age by consuming and validating the hip and fashionable and sporting ideologies that are irrelevant to the position and economic power they now hold..Peretti, refers to these people as ‘middle youth’. (ibid 4). These people mostly successful professionals aspire to recreate their youthful image. The star’s youthfulness maintained professionally allow this group to create their own nostalgic image and become fashionable all over again by marketing back to other adolescents and young people ‘fixed notions of youth style’. (ibid). The star body of SRK lends to this process where youth and youthfulness are transformed into another form of mass consumption and his body serves as a site for the same.

A semiotic reading of SRK’s positioning within the ad texts delivering the true – meaning of his star-presence occurs through an organization of the symbolic system. Elements derived from the star-paradigm of body, appearance, acting, gestures . and the product itself combined with codes of fashion, glamour, representation, marketing, gender rules etc. produce a syntagmatic arrangement, an ordered array of signs to produce the desired meaning. The particularities of star-image is mobilised and As in linguistics, advertisements as signifying texts represent the complete meaning of association on between the star and the product through combining sense of elements from various paradigms into a syntagm. The syntagmatic cross referencing among signs and codes activates along with the syntagmatic effect of combination, bring to fore certain codes of meaning more readily over others. In the text of the advertisement that says: “Have I made it large?” “He is i advert, stars biography, their wealth taste and status is activated while sidelining the others (See Thwaites et al, 2002. p. 43-43).

The star’s positioning within the Pepsodent (toothpaste) ad, or Nerolac (home- paint) or RoyalStag (malt whisky) offers interesting illustrations. For example as alchhol advertising is no longer permitted, alchhol adverts make particularly ingenious uses of metonymy to overcome some of these constraints. Without exhibiting the product
which is an otherwise impermissible sign is invoked by a metonymic sign associated with it. While the name of the brand and its logo becomes a metonym of the contents, and the ‘smart posturing of two successful Bollywood heroes: Shah Rukh Khan and Saif Ali Khan also acting as metonyms ascribed to the product value. Shah Rukh’s metanonymically for his unparallel success known as ‘King Khan’ and Saif for his regal genealogy, belonging to the family of Nawab of Pataudi, become metonyms suggestive of the brand name viz. Royal.

In the Pepsodent ad. famously that of Pappu and Papa (father-Shah Rukh) in front of a bathroom basin advising his son ‘Pappu’ to use Pepsodent toothpaste. The mis-en-scene, the early morning appearance, the night suit clad actor and the child are syntagmatically arranged to produce an affectionately coded domestic/family sequence. Syntagmatically, the star is a metaphor for the product, whose paternal care, informed choice, in the guise of a father also deriving from his public image as an affectionate father of two children and his fame, credibility as a super star of Bollywood film industry is metaphorically transferred to the product. The product gains from this metaphoric transpositions derived from the popular star. The text producing a semiotic effect applies the star to fix a ‘denotative meaning’ in favour of the product which is a toothpaste, (and so too applies for all other products he endorses). By being linked to the star image, as a signifier, Pepsodent for instance the longer merely connotes a toothpaste metaphorically denotes efficiency, health and trustedness.

Star presence, strengthens the myth upheld by advertisements as naturalized facts, conceal ideological influence and semiotic workings of the advertising text’s signs and coded. Semiotic analysis reveals that ‘ … myth emerges in texts as an ordering of connotations. It conceals its identity as one social meaning among many for a texts signs, and seems instead to be the only, natural meaning. It parallels and extends, on the level of texts, the ways in which at the level of signs, denotations act as the apparently truthful connotation. The effect of myth is to naturalise social meanings and values …

Myth turns social signs into ‘facts’. (Thwaites et al. 2002., p. 82).

Advertising texts produced in social contexts, are always informed by influenced by and reproduce the cultural values and myths of those contexts. For instance, in adverts of men’s inner wear (Onn from Lux Cozi) the sculpted body (adorned by the wear) is naturalized as the desired and desirable masculine body; while in adverts of male fairness cream (Emami Fair and Handsome) fairness of men becomes a naturalized virtue and its gender specificity also naturalized the difference in cosmetic requirements of men and women. These advertisements are determined by prevailing
cultural myths and attitudes that affect the structure and meaning of text. Myths underlie the text and seem to be naturalized, and remain hidden within the text. They remain unnoticed as they invite acceptance as social truths (ibid. p. 85). Star power used to reaffirm the myth firmly since as a popular star he already has claim to a good body and attractive look. Shah Rukh’s biographical references, as a man with stable marital life and a happy family with two children, his material accomplishments status etc. allow his star power to reaffirm in several ads. the ‘family’ as the dominant myth and the secondary myth riding on it is that of consumption. The family myth valued and upheld bail tout consumerist myth, by rendering ‘it more palatable or acceptable, and even by pressurizing… not to reject the apparent denotations of family contentment’ (ibid.,p90) The culture myth of family and family values support consumption. In advertisements like Pepsodent, where as a responsible and informed father advises him to apply the product. As consumption (of the toothpaste) is modeled on the family, and if we read it through the myth of family, then it becomes difficult to reject the myth of consumption. As to reject it would mean to reject ideals of family/paternity. The secondary myth of consumption that appears secondary and less striking turns out to be the dominant governing the entire text.

Advertisements are often invested with symbolic power that may jockey for prestige through ‘taste’(see, Bourdieu,1984) and is one of the regular mechanisms of social consumption. Challenging the more modest advertisements of products like talcum powder(Himani Nav Ratan Cool), biscuits (Sunfeast), toothpaste ( Pepsodent)and the star’s greater amenability for most people, advertising (for instance, of products like Tag Heur watches) uses ‘symbolic distinctions of taste as an indispensable strategy producing distinctions which may be almost purely symbolic’ (Thwaites et. al.) In being a sign, the watch ‘produces a phatic group of addresses’ (that includes the star) ‘and addressee, and distinguishes various degrees of belonging’. Such products through their exclusivity opens up ‘an arena of symbolic distinction’ also. Popular stars, like Shah Rukh often become hostage of such ‘distinction’ that removes him from many. The aura of a star, his glamour his rise and material success accords him (Shah Rukh) what he himself acknowledges in an interview given to New Delhi Televisions (NDTV) on 28.6.2012 ‘I am the great Indian middle class dream’ - an ‘agent’, an embodiment of wish fulfillment for the upwardly mobile burgeoning Indian middle class. This image of the star allow him to entice and realize the possibility of fulfilling desire as ‘Texts can offer roles that seem so commonsensical it may seem hard to conceive of doing otherwise. They can be …, so that it may seem odd to want things any other way. They can offer positions from which a number of difficult things
suddenly seem simple or conflicting things are reconciled. They can even offer you what seems to have been your own desire all along, reflected back to you. This is much more subtle a procedure that use of force, became rather than impose … it asks for your consent. This invitation this from of address - is ideology itself" (Thwaites 2002, p. 162)

The ideological address and the promise of wish fulfilment is articulated through the star person of SRK across several texts of adverts.

Both Alberoni and by default King as Dyer observes, expressly point to the need to examine stars in terms of ideology. Borrowing Edgar Morin’s idea of ‘production-consumption dialectics of mass communications’, Dyer holds that ‘stars a phenomenon of production (arising from what the makers of films provide) or of consumption (arising from what the audience for films demands)?’ (Dyer. 1979. p. 8-9). Dyer’s view allow us to see how stars like commodities are produced, demanded for and consumed. Stars as social phenomenon are ideologically placed within ‘production - consumption dialectic’. Such placement brings truth an ideological articulation of the dialectic of production consumption. Stars are produced and consumed in terms that essentially involve visual images. Images, here is not an exclusive visual sign, instead what Dyer clams as ‘a complex configuration of visual, verbal and aural signs. This configuration may constitute the general image of stardom… It is manifest not only in films but in all kinds of media text’ (ibid. p. 38). It is this visual complex that extends into advertisements. The body, the voice, the appearance of the star, the skin, every detail of star presence and all that exudes it in the ad becomes significant to the text.

Mention may be made of the more recent trend of selling advertising space in the movie. The early beginnings came in before, but ‘The logic of corporate sponsorship for films was taken to new level a few years later by Shah Rukh Khan. When Dreamz Unlimited (a company that SRK, formed along with actress Juhi Chawla and director Aziz Mirza), produced ‘Phir Bhi Dil Hai Hindustani (Still the Heart Remains Indian, with the first two starring and the third directing). The company raised a fair amount of money from corporation which in the bargain got several scenes devoted to their products. So, Shah Rukh Khan woos Juhi Chawla in front of a Swatch Watch Kiosk and drives around in a Santro car and so on. This take over of the diegetic space by corporations is called synergy between industry and entertainment (Deshpande. 2005. p. 190). Shah Rukh therefore actively engaged his film producing initiatives with brand endorsements within dogetic space.

The spectacularized visual representation of SRK’s star charisma across ads, as in neon lit billboards or banners enables an ‘amplification of that charisma’ (Jacob, 2010, p. 3)
and combined with the power of the photographic image, magnified to gigantic proportions it evokes the memory (or promise) of filmic pleasure (ibid p 12). In other words ads seek to reproduce cinematic magic and inter textually suture it with the larger cinematic image and recall a continuity with it as best illustrated in the Linc pen and Videocon advertisements that appropriated the diegetic SRK of RA.One, with the armoured hero texts of these advertisements, as a recall of the cinematic memory, mnemonically reproducing the star. Consumer brands associated with the star are seen to symbiotically gain from the star’s filmic engagements as well as do films.

Shah Rukh’s film “Ra One” was the first Indian film to be marketed through Nokia’s cutting edge Near Field Communication (NFC) technology on its new range of Symbian Belle smart phone – Nokia 700 and Nokia 701. The company has set up exclusives “Ra One” zones at over 400 Nokia Priority Partner outlets and select multiplexes across the country. Consumers buying a Symbian Belle smart phone could get exclusive content from the film such as images, applications, games. On set exclusives and more promos by just tapping their devices on “Ra One” NFC tags. Lucky SRK fans were to get a chance to win tickets to a special screening of “Ra One” in six cities (16.10.11 Calcutta Times, Times of India p 17). Even global restaurant chains like Mc Donald partnered with the film “Ra One” as part of its promotional campaigns. The symbiotic alliance was contingent upon interest of the company and the film. Commenting on this promotion a senior manager of Mc Donald’s India said Shah Rukh is a beloved star and Mc Donald’s is proud of associating with him. We believe in giving our customers an “I’m lovin it experience everytime they visit our outlets. Our association with “Ra One” is an extension of just that (18.10.2011, Calcutta Times, The Times of India). Also the Lux Soap ad that was launched with his co-star Katrina Kaif during the film Jab Tak Hai Jaan(2012, As Long As I Live, directed by: Yash Chopra) continues to capture the diegetic romance of the two actors for promoting the product much after the film released till date. A very significant aspect to be cited vis-à-vis Shah Rukh Khan’s engagement with advertisements is therefore involvement of corporate marketing. ‘The transition or crossover in marketing terms from a domestic film product that has comparatively fewer options for merchandising its products to one that more successfully gears itself for exploiting the new marketing opportunities that Bollywood now presents…While Hum Aapke Hain Kaun? Was perhaps the first Indian film to recognize and then systematically explit a marketing opportunity here, it has since been most visibly Shah Rukh Khan who has been committed to the Bollywood mode, mainly as an actor (DDLJ, Pardes, DTPH, KKKH) but this year with Phirr Bhí Dil Hai Hindustani having personally taken charge
oven its global marketing’ (Rajadhyalisha 2007 p 456). Taking advantage of his corporate ties with companies like Videocon/Nokia he intelligently aligned it to his home production Ra One’s sciencefiction that commensurately concurred with the technology based companies. Demonstratably this is ‘all the new money flowing into the cinema right now is concentrating on the ancillary sector of film production…the range of consumables increasingly visible on film screen – Stroli’s been in DDIJ, ..Swatch watches in Phil Bhi Dil Hai Hindustani – are symptomatic of the nature of funding that the cinema increasingly depends upon..’ (ibid p 465). In films ads of the two films cited above incidentally of SRK produces a continuity of his consumerist image in both film and beyond in ads etc.

Taking cue from Barthes idea of ads producing second order myth, of something ideologically produced (Barthes,1973) it can be further argued that in addition to the logic of capital and its economic underpinnings, ads have an auratic effect in its representation. Advertisers effectively manipulate and manage perception in blurring of reality and representation, what in Baudrillard’s view is the “hyper-real”. It is the promise of good life (Décor), good body (Sona Chandi Chwanprash), good oral health (Pepsodent toothpaste) good domestic choices (Videocon gadget, Nerolac paint) good life (Sanro/i-10 Hyundai cars) etc. mediated by Shah Rukh and his image that convincingly advocates in favour and endorse them, and produces him, borrowing Baudrillard’s(1994) understanding as a “Hyper-real” text on neon-lit billboards, TV screen, glossy magazine pages, newspaper ads etc. The spectacularized representation seeking to amplify his glamour and charm on these publicity space seeks to precede the ‘real’. It is his projected image that outstrips the real through symbolic manipulation of ads. For example in an advertisement of home furnishings, (Décor) image managers of advertising company have fascinatingly worked to obfuscate the boundaries between personal life of SRK to create a ‘rarefied imagery’ of consumerist marital(and familial/conjugal) bliss as he poses with his happy smiling real wife Gauri Khan within a lavishly embellished domestic space. Such is the popularity, charisma and success of the star that ads often appropriate his real image and simulates real moments of his life for making ad films. For instance the ad on live pen simulates a nostalgic moment of his school life, his purchase of the coveted bungalow ‘Mannat’(meaning wish fulfilment) he now stays (19.5.2011 t2 p3 The Telegraph). Also the recent Imami fair and Handsome where the star enacts his past biographical moments that brought him present success. Such strips of ‘biographical’ simulations are of extreme semiotic and social significance.
What is interesting to state that advertisements have exploited the competition between stars and stars have provided face to wars of competing brands. The cola war between Coke and Pepsi, two beverage multinational giants deployed stars, wherein Shah Rukh was pitched in a Pepsi ad against Coke’s mascot Hritik Roshan, then a relative newcomer to the industry as a hero had posed a challenge to the ruling position of SRK following the success of his film Kaho Naa Pyaar Hai (Tell Me It’s Love, 2000, directed by Rakesh Roshan) The filmic competition was transferred to ads to the advantage of the brands. (Anando Lok. 24/6/2000. p. 72-76) In another report it was said how the Pepsi ads disparaged Hritik albeit indirectly, to counter Coke’s publicity through projecting Hritik, the new heart Herob of million youngsters. So far the two Cola brands, had either two other Bolywood stars- Salman or Aamir on their side. But they now counterposed SRK, the reigning star against Hritik in view of the latter’s recent box office success. (Anandolok 10/6/2000. p. 36-37)

Reviewing the history of Bollywood’s star engagement in advertisement and publicity campaigns a popular magazine (see notes 1, for the abstract from the article on the history) brings to for the uniqueness that SRK introduced to this. The history of stars from Hindi film industry in advertisements though not a recent one it was not so decades before to which SRK introduced almost pioneering changes. Earlier accepted this smooth straddling between modeling and film acting and came to read this differently. If any less known or unknown model from the ad world entered films it was seen as his/her upward mobility, because as a medium film comparison to ads was more widely ranged, had greater reach and relatively more enduring. However film stars involvement in ads was seen as degrading, demeaning and was held in derision. Audience could sympathise with new actors, but on seeing senior, elderly one time famous superstars featuring in ads they read it as their helplessness or compulsion. It was believed that when one’s film career is on decline, ads provided supplementary remuneration people assumed that if one had enough number of films one could not give time to commercial organization for their ads. Such was the cynicism and snobbery in the attitude of star. If they ever saw their favourite film star in an ad. they sympathetically assumed that the stars career graph is at a low and has failed to obtain enough film offers. Such a perception was so firmly entrenched that even super star Amitabh Bachchan at the height of his career refused offers of many ads lest his image before fans suffers a bit. But ironically when he returns to films after a hiatus in early years of post liberalization to resume has career, he was seen in ads like BPL and his countless admirers then heaved a sign to repeat their cynically pitiful belief that the star has no market value left in him, there is no demand for him and yet to earn money it
was his compulsive choice to turn to ads. This attitude towards film stars in ads. persisted till 90’s. In mid90’s there came a radical change in the said attitude. This remarkable change was brought in by none other than Shah Rukh Khan and at the very beginning of his career did an advertisement for Mayur Suitings. Even then it could not be gauged what his next revolutionary step would be. People saw this as his preparatory step in the ad. world to consolidate his position in films eventually and this was inferred from his career graph. Then within a few years SRK acting in incredible roles soon become the uncrowned emperor of the film world and at the same time along with films signed enormous number of modeling assignments. Pepsi, Hyundai Santro, LRK Perfume, Top Ramen Smooth noodles. Bagpiper, Omega Watches - SRK is everywhere. In fact the number of endorsements he has done can unsurprisingly exceed the total number of endorsement done together by all the film stars. And all this he is doing along with his successful film and acting career, while occupying top most position in his film career. While on one hand he has demolished the almost God-like image of an ideal lofty masculinity of film heroes and established himself as an average human of flesh and blood with normal emotions and share of vices of lust, greed, desire, envy and its illogicalities. He has descended from sky-touching ivory tower image of film stars surrounded by aural mysticism, something ethereal unreal, fantastic to something within one’s reach - on earth, amongst his fans as literally seen in the various stage shows. He also exploded the myth and the notion that people pitifully nurtured when they saw film stars in ads. His engagements in ads was not as a struggling beginner with few roles who has to remain in the competition, but even while remaining at the height of his success and popularity, simultaneously completing his film assignments he endorsed ads one after the other. Shah Rukh in a way has redefined stardom and gave birth to new ones.

In various interview Shah Rukh have quietly admitted the need for earning money and convincingly argued that in the short lived film careers he needs to capitalize upon his phenomenal popularity in order to sustain himself for the rest of his life and therefore his urge to arrange for his family’s securities for his future life and this though a personal opinion yet appears a prudent perspective. As a result modern pragmatic and intelligent public accepting his candid, honest and logical argument have pleasantly and delightfully embraced he role of the megastar SRK doing publicity of everyday commodities and in an additional role of promoting their sales. Inspired by Shah Rukh, there now appears a craze and desire for product endorsements even among the brightest luminaries of the film world of Mumbai. In fact the two giant soft drink companies: Pepsi and Coca Cola have virtually waged a war to rope in to get the best
of the stars as their models. While Pepsi, brought in Shah Rukh, Kajol, Rani, Manisha, Coke had Aamir Khan, Karishma, Twinkle and Salman (for Thums-Up). The situation today is such that product endorsement have become a status symbol for stars. Not to be selected as a model for any product means that the star is no longer successful and Popular. ‘Saleable Star’ is an expression relevant for film as well the consumer market. In this sense, stars are no less a commodity.

In this context, debates have raised over the issue of over-exposure of ads and how it influences the endurance of their success as well popularity. It is apprehended that stars in publicity and promotion campaigns are adversely affected for being over-exposed and also might look demeaning stars like Shah Rukh are fearless and have no such inhibitions against product endorsements. Instead SRK is happy that his popularity can be used to sell products to many people. His faith in his popularity amongst audience is such that without compulsively proving the real merit of the product directly or indirectly. Shah Rukh can promote a product in many ad films. For instance, Shah Rukh not shown to drink Bagpiper, yet two lines delivered can create confidence in the minds of audience about the quality of the brand. Recently it is being heard that he will endorse a dandruff free shampoo, without having to show any dandruff on his hair. Earlier in such ads as in a hair dye advertisement even Sunil Gavaskar and glamorous actress Tanuja were seen in grey and black hair to people’s surprise. Whether in personal lives they apply the dye or not is a different question (and possibly not) but for the sake of convincing audience they had to project it as their personal choice for personal use and in both the scenes of the ad film the produce did not lose the chance to prove a direct correlation. In this matter Shah Rukh has proved to be both experimental and successful .. the logic of critics he unabashedly accepts his social role as a ‘Madari (street player). For other words, as a film star he considers his task to entertain and keeping himself accessible in people’s everyday lives. And it is thus desire to reach people in their day to day lives that finds an expression in SRK’S words. As advertisements are lucrative and a handsome amount accrues from such assignments in cash, the star, SRK believes it is needed to maintain his starry living or his lifestyle. This means he does not have to do formulaic roles and a few films a year can both fulfill his acting self, his artistic desire, his performative role and at the same time maintain his family and its ‘befitting livelihood’. Besides ads are less time consuming than films and rewards are comparatively higher and at the same time filmstars now are more pragmatic. They do not want to repeat or experience the misery of earlier stars, who carried away by their momentary success were reduced to penury for their lavish extravagance. Realisation of a short career span and equally transient phase of youthful
glamour and attractiveness. They now seek to derive the most from their present popularity. In order to secure their future against vagaries they need such assuring savings. As long as sales index are rising upwardly commercial organizations will continue to spend to deploy a high priced star for their ads. (Anandolok. 29/4/2000 p. 29-34)

Realising competition between stars advertisers of competing brand choose their models from the film world. For instance all ads of men’s inner wears have Bollywood heroes as their models: Shah Rukh (for Onn by Lux Cozi); Akshay (for Dolar Club) Hritik (for Rupa), Saif Ali Khan (for Amul Macho) and so on. Such campaignising that counterpoises one hero against the other as face of a product also incites fans passion who too get emotionally embroiled. In fact, the fierce competition between SRk and then an emerging star Hrittik was actually fought through Cola War and other merchandise. (Andndolok. 25/11/2000. p. 29)

The engagement of stars in promoting sales of consumer items constituting part of our everyday life and mundane uses makes them integral to what Raymond Williams called ‘lived cultures’ ‘where culture is produced through everyday living: the food people eat the fashions they adopt…people leading their everyday lives produce culture’. (Nayar 2008 p29). Lifestyle and consumption of cultural artefacts in everyday life go together and this is supported by an indulgent, pleasure seeking ideology. Consumption is itself a new form of identity (ibid). This ideology finds consonance in the yuppie, romantic, urbane, flambouyant, stylized body and image of the star. And as identity is no longer hostage to older form of social relations (class family location caste) but the lifestyle you lead and the products you use (ibid 31). As older forms of association and identity structures are breaking up and with individual moving away from such structures one seeks one’s identity in lifestyle (ibid). Casting of Shah Rukh in consumersist aesthetics of feelgood melodramatic family romance with mis-en-scene steeped in idiom of good living lends him to be easily translated to his imaging in ads promoting consumption and lifestyle choices. The narcissism associated with the adored image of stardom is commensurate to lifestyle choice as a matter of self-realization where an individual can assert her/his own tastes, preferences, comforts and enable the individual to discover and create her/his own identity, no matter what her/his background (ibid). The centrality of individual identity in lifestyle choice render deployment of stars and celebrities as appropriate examplars of an individual’s exalted status and superlative attributes and attainments.

Besides as a popular star peddling global consumerist products allow people (consumers, real and potential) to locate through the mediating star-text a transformation and
translation of the global in their own own nature contexts (Nayar ibid p 32). The star acts as the interface of the local and the global, an agent of face of what Robertson calls the ‘glocal’(ibid p33) Star power gives a local inflexion and meaning to global brands and cultural artfacts.

‘Everyday life now adds local meanings to global cultural artfacts. The third world individual embeds the global within the familiar local, tinges the global with a local colour…local is not necessarily marginalized in the consumerist everydaylife: it is emphasized…We cannot say that everyday life is dominated or taken over by global cultures. Everyday life is fiercely contested where the meanings of global cultural artfacts are re-invented, re-inscribed by native cultures. The consumer is not a passive receipient of global cultural icons or artfacts. S/he modifies what s/he receives to suit her/his own purposes, and engages with the global cultures in a native way, often productively re-doing the global to fit in with an Indian cultural system’. (Nayar 2008 p34-35). Shah Rukh’s popularity providing some kind competitive advantage to the brands he campaigns for especially the multinational brands can also be seen as a response to make these brands for eg. Nokia, Tag Heur culturally relevant and connected to local cultures. The star image indigenize brands to a local constituencies. The vanguard of globalization seeks to temper the brands but not without qualification. The role of the star is to connect the global to the nation ( Hunter et al 2002.ibid see p 341) Personifying and indigenization of the brands are the two key functions of SRK vis-à-vis global brands a conduit of socio spatila level of interaction involving local, national and global (see Mann, 2002 p 153, 155).

The choice of Indian stars and celebrities by global brands within promotional publicity campaigns is informed by the above said wisdom to re-cast the product in local/national context through mediation of the model. The star model conjoins the global to its local popular and discursive practices or uses. It can be a argued that star power can act as cultural intermediaries to mediate between production of a cultural product and its consumer. He or she appears as a marketing ploy is suggestive of particular worth and values which is transferred to the product. The star provides a link between culture and the economy. Their function is representation: presenting the cultural object in such a way that a desire for the same is created in the consumer, who then buys the object ( Nayar, ibid 2008 p 38-39). The aura and charisma of the star as a coveted ego ideal offer narcissistic inclinations render the product he/she endorses a desired value.Providing a literal as well metaphorical link between products and consumer the star as face of the brand suggests a certain diffusion of material attributes between the
star and the product endorses. In instance when Shah Rukh endorses Pepsi it suggests that part of his glamour is informed by the brand he endorses (see Nayar).

Taste as a marker of difference as noted by Pierre Bourdieu has its illustrative explication in SRK’s engagement accross a range of advertisements making it clear that the star do not address or represent singular taste linked to any particular status or class affiliations. His address couched in more inclusive propagandist rhetoric appeals to an universalized consumer base. The appeal is to the universalized consumer citizen that glosses over all markers of social identities based on class, caste, religion, ethnic identity etc. execting gender. As each product notwithstanding the universal inclusive rhetoric of the propandist call of the ad symbolizes a certain consumption pattern, choice, lifestyle, taste etc. One can note how paradoxically the star through a particular product endorsement (depending on the product, its price, its manufacturing brand market goodwill) is symbolizing a certain ‘taste’ and its manifested preferences (Bourdien 1989 p 56). As taste is exclusive as it governs consumption of a certain kinds of goods and lifestyle or identity making, the star across a wide range of branded products from expensive watches to mundane biscuits/toothpaste links him to wide range of consumption practices and lifestyle. One can argue to say that the fact that popular stars like SRK seen to be endorsing a wide range of products serve to neutralize the status or taste distinction. From modest men’s inner wear to expensive gadgets the star invests his star value within all with equal measure – as a peddlar par-excellence. The star-value creates the need and desire to consumer while enticing the consumer to life style related choices. Life style choice are related to the question of individual identity when advertised through celebrities/stars acting as exemplars of modeled identities. The valued identities of stars are of extreme importance to the ads. The cultural dimension of economy, where by goods and services apart from being merely ‘utilities’ are also endowed with social value via ads with celebrities endorsing them ensure these star figures to be valuables of the social value of the product. Stars and their celebrity identities themselves endowed with intrinsic value of status, prestige, reputation are seen to be parallel to the symbolic value of good advertised. The biographical narrative of SRK’s successful making star identity are often captured in ads. Advertisements frequently showcase identity. Be yourself announce ads for various products. Develop your self esteem announces another what is important is that being oneself and developing self-esteem markers of selfhood and identity – are linked to the purchase and use of commodities. Identity therefore gets coded as objects of consumption (Nayar 2008 p 125). For example in the Dish TV ad the star is made to say a line which through sounds ephemistic, captures middle class desire for more the
Wish Karo Dish Karo i.e. Wish and get Dish. In the advertisement of an alcoholic beverage (hard drinks) the caption understanding his stylized posturing on billboard says: He is his own Godfather or the other caption that which asks if there is any need for him to attain more.

With lifestyle being aligned to consumption of goods and identity being expressed through lifestyle and consumption, render commodities as signs of both lifestyle and identity. Translating these commodities into signs through representation, which is the first stage in the circuit of consumption Representational practices are best evident in ads through espousal of particular products through representational mode of language which refers to oral visual and textual. It speaks about the products and its utility and social value. Studies assumes that representational practices seek to construct specific images and meanings of the object and forge an identification between consumer and the meanings that the object stand for. In a bid to create this relationship between the product and the consumer, ads project the commodity as a component of an identity we desire. The commodity is a sign of this identity we desire. Therefore we cannot acquire the identity we desire until we acquire the commodity we are not only a commodity but also the sign and identity that goes with it (Nayar 2005 p 133). As celebrities have an identity that is valued, it finds easy marketability within representational texts like ads. Shah Rukh here for instance known for his success goodwill glamour etc is a desired model of identity to which consumers are drawn. The value of the commodity is mediated via star text of SRK. For instance the Hyundai i-10 car proposes that the car is a sign of status, technological efficiency and style – and they are some of the defining attributes in the discourse of SRK’s star identity. In ads of toothpaste, home paints the emphasis is on the quality of its health value for gadgets it is its efficiency for décor and fashion it is its stylized look. Interestingly the virtues are seen to be embodied by the star himself and hence his identity can express its identification with such life style choices.

The other roles played by the star is indigenization of consumer identity is enabled by star and also that the star links the product to a larger community of buyer who reposed their trust in the product. The star demonstrating the value and usability of the product as the brand ambassador forges a link between the product (and the company/brand) to the consumer/user. The knowledge about the product and the trust it seeks from real and potential buyers is transmitted via star text. The trust invested by the community of buyers is largely enhanced and maintained by star presence within the advertising text (see Nayar 2008 p 133-134). The transnational market and consumer culture appear to have hemmed urban metropolitan’s everyday life leading to a homogenized
lifestyle (Barbero 1993) p196). Based on de Carteau’s understanding of productive consumption in everyday and reworking genius of popular culture, it is claimed that despite homogenizing consumerist mass culture there is scope for interpretative reading, subversion and subjection to various forms of resistance and reworking based upon different cultural competences (Barbero 1993 p214). It can be therefore argued that while MNC deploy Indian star power to campaign for their products this element indigeneity or familiarity of the star image precludes the text to produce a hegemonic message and makes advertising a more comprehensive space crossed by different trajectories of popular reading involving productive consumption, pleasure as well resistance. The popularity of star can activate cultural abilities enabling commercial logic of ads and popular demands to coalesce, collide and negotiate (see Barbero).

Notwithstanding the indigenization of products (multinational brands) through deployment of popular stars like SRK, these images become part of transborder flows – that is, relations that transcend territorial frontiers – largely escape controls at state boundaries (Scholte, 2000 p 48). The transposition of Shah Rukh’s image onto a seamless sphere accord a certain globality or supraregional to his image borrowed by global brands. At the same time, a counter tendency of glocalization can be illustrated in the Pepsodent advert, where Shah Rukh playing a doting father (Pappa) to the son (Pappu) is seen to Orientalize the product by doing a Ravan mask affirming an Indianness (see Occidentalisation of Thai product while retaining uniqueness of Thai identity in a Thai ad: in Nedpogaeo 2001, pp 108-109).

Interestingly what popular and recognizable faces like SRK. Amir and Bachchan can achieve is to achieve a consumer-citizen unity and ironically often through promoting a MNC brand that serves to bind the nation-wide community of users otherwise diverse. We have a MNC brand that appropriates a post colonial Indian slogan for its promotion. India’s consumer globalization is disguised as a unifying ethos. It marks a shift in paradigms – from a political culture and sloganeering to consumer-globalisation (Nayar 2008 p153).

Looking at Shah Rukh’s value as a brand himself and his brand equity it needs to be seen how the star and his presence coalesce with the brand –i.e. product/company to produce the brand as a quasi-signature phased by John Frow(as cited in Nayar, ibid 150). It needs to be said that the competitive market economy marked by stiff competition between brands (the famous Cola for eg.) build their brand around a particular star/celebrity. And as marketing strategies are increasingly dependent on celebrity endorsements, consumers are being bombarded with competing representations by advertising text, both visual and aural.. Each is stylistically crafted
and has an unique way of appealing. This can be cited as what the link between style and interpellation.

Style as a configuration of distinctive, recognizable, formal pattern is thoroughly interconnected with interpellation, not only because difference between various interpellations is not just stylistic but also as a set of processes and interpellation involves the assertion of an entire discourse as a superior form of representing experience, which the individual must recognize as a language of truth if he/she is to answer the call. It only one interpellation is at work, then purposeful differentiation among discourses would be unnecessary as all would contribute to unitary dominant ideology. But conflicting and also contradictory interpellations are at play simultaneously within a given social formation, stylistic differences as visible signs of differences between discourses are themselves interpellations. Once individuals are exposed to multiple interpellations...when unitary culture gives way to fragmentary culture in which discourses have no fixed audience or body of pre-existent subjects, competitive interpellation is inevitable. (Collins 1989 p 86-87).

Consumers are subject to multiple interpellative voices of ads deploying stars/celebrities for their publicity campaigns. Thus if SRK in Pepsi, Nokia. Tag Heur watches interpellates, correspondingly in similar and competing segments one can see Amir Khan, the competing hero interpellating in ads of Coke, Samsung and Titan watches.

As commodities all aim at a single goal viz to be consumed but the means of attaining the goal might take different or divergent forms that problematize the construction of an uniform subjectivity and fail to exhibit any kind of integration or coordination of design. This seen to be an absence of orchestration in post-modern context. While we are often encouraged to define ourselves through commodities, but the absence of coordination in such a process results in orur being asked to define ourselves in quite different ways. (Collins ibid p 128). In addition to multiple interpellation by different endorsing voices (star models), a single model is seen to endorse various commodities. Endorsements as a often specific to the product, its target population, one can observe how stars like SRK purveyor to diverse range of products – allow his star persona to split himself into many subjectivities. If for instance Lux Cozi sees him as a muscular, well built Hunk sporting men’s inner wear in his sculpted bourgeois leisure prone body, in Pepsodent toothpaste ad he is a caring hygiene conscious. New man father doting his son, in Hyundai i-10 he is a romantic lover boy trying to covort his lady love. But in all these ads, the star image provide a supra-discoursive principle – an icon of the master narrative of global consumerism. And despite these commodities being put to differential use and discoursive usage – SRK acts as the central mediator a brand
himself across several brands (products) is ascribed a semblance of an unified consumer subjectivity before the people(or community of consumer citizens).

While the star image is deployed as a marketing strategy and a saleable commodity is also endowed with cultural and symbolic dimension and is related to the issue of circulation of meaning along with its brand/material value. And the engagement of the star in publicity campaigns promoting commodities implicate the star within a capitalist ideology. This involvement is a material expression of his reproducible image within a capitalist culture and also renders him complicet with it ideology. His engagement serve to validate and invigorate the culture of capitalism (see Fiske 1989 p 10-11; 14) Fiske’s argues that advertisements seeks to control the cultural meanings of commodities by mapping them as tightly as possible onto the workings of financial economy. Advertising therefore works hard to match social differences with cultural differences with product differences(Fishe, 1989 p 29). This understanding help to appreciate why popular stars like SRK and others are strategically deployed as devices of containment with a star appeal across many divides, acting as a centralizing and hegemonizing forces with a gravitating pull. In addition to this it may be further re-iterated that unlike some stars who are typecasted and selectively chosen for endorsing certain products, stars like Bachchan and Shah Rukh have a large range of products to their credit, starting from cars to toothpaste, from macho projections to a caring family man image.

The most visible manifestation of the emerging global culture is in the vehicle of popular culture and is propagated by global business enterprises of all types. Despite their control in the hands of capitalist elites the pervasive influence of popular culture allow for vast scope for penetration among the masses. The ubiquity and regular consumption turns global brand commonplace, and vicariously participate in an American style modernity (Berger et al p6 2002, p.6). The influence is so persuasive that consumer products of global brands become naturalized as any other consumer option (ibid p 7). It thus may be argued that global brands launch themselves through popular faces and forge a close identification wherein the national/regional star help to indigenize it and turn it more familiar. Star power or star presence acts as a vehicle of the global. Rise of a consumerist popular culture with an interest in leisure, food, entertainment, travel, desire for material goods are being blatantly displayed in films, sitcoms, popular music video and other forms of mass media, encouraging people to buy more, consume and indulge. Popular stars like SRK act as purveyors of this indulgent culture of pleasure and consumption. Participation in a global popular culture and partaking the strand culture of consumption transcending national boundaries
clearly shows the centrality of agency in choice of cultural globalization (Yan, 2002, p. 33).

The choice in favour of consumerism prompted by economic and cultural globalization is often the result of seduction by ideal of a good life. To attract people and produce a sense of empowerment via such consumerist choices, a common strategy of transnational companies is to deploy local strategies and adapt to local idiom (ibid p 35). Star power like SRK provide such local ploys, whose wish fulfilling and acquisitive persona in film convincingly promises to gratify a pleasure seeking real/potential consumer. Besides, Shah Rukh’s career in both films and advertisements corresponds or coincides uncannily with the times when the nation is coming out of its protectionist statist regime. A culture sanctifying consumption by supplanting an earlier culture of thrift, allow such stars mobilizing people in favour of such pleasure. It is worth noting that the trend towards greater internationalization of economy, rooted in transnational capital, mass production, powerful communication is readily observable in global mass consumption. (see, Hsiao 2002). Popular culture mediating mass consumption is one of the most visible manifestation of the global. This understanding privileges positing of the star body of SRK and his image (that poses in favour of consumerist items) both as a ‘consumer and consummable’ mediates the global in the arena of popular culture and mass consumption. Besides endorsing the ads invites gaze towards the star body itself, his attractive persona, his charm and charisma all of which as consumable traits conjoins with the product/lifestyle goods endorsed.

Global popular culture based on mass-consumption, also known as Mc World (Hsiao, ibid. p 55) culture tend to produce a homogenous urban midele class lifestyle, mostly appealing to young urbanities. Upholding new lifestyle choice. These artifacts represent new symbols and meanings in life. Crucial to expression of taste, choice status identity. Brand endorsement through star vehicle are carriers of meanings – as a rallying point, as a reference for embracing those choices. Star power allow multinational to invade public/national space. From modest men’s inner wears of ordinary local brand to endorsing multinational brands – SRK’s image produces an equalizing effect from view point of status symbol. Posing as the anchor point, the symbol –Real in Lacanian sense of identification, the star allowing his identity to coalesce with several brands acts as model for consumption. His image as a fluid signifier negotiates with disparate and diverse brands.

Among a cornucopia of products and majority of people being extensive consumer ror channel surfers, in a world of globalised culture, product sellers apprehensive of a fleeting tourist relationship, between mobile goods and customers (Cowen 2002 p 111)
seek to sensationalize their publicity campaigns. In an environment of cultural tosimism, famous, familiar, star-images like that of SRK much in circulation across varied media texts are useful in reinforcing an easily recognizable association between the star and the product. The star power tends to halt the wandering eyes of cultural tourists (see Cowen ibid.). Shah Rukh Khan has endorsed 34 brands in all – the highest for an Indian. Every one wants a piece of SRK be it brand or agencies (2.11.10 The Times of India).

In the case of celebrities who have attained the status of a cult figure, defining a time, like Amitabh Bachchan and later Shah Rukh acquires a greater semantic significance in their association with brands.

Among the very few male celebrity who have endorsed female products. Shah Rukh Khan ranks among the first. The choice of the brand managers in favour of the star once again reinstantes his success and brand value. A report says: For a man who’s done it all (almost!). This is another feather in an already well-feathered cap! Shah Rukh Khan has announced as the brand ambassador of the jewellery brand Gitanjali Group. (28.9.11 Times of India). Responding to the choice for SRK, Mehul Choksi, Chief Managing Director of the group says that the star is in consonance with the core value of the group: It’s a value we share with Shah Rukh who is also a symbol of loyalty and romance (ibid). This allow us to acknowledge that such is the brand value that his gender is not a hostage to gender specific products as his goodwill often becomes transcendental to align more with the brand equity than with the product.

Often in products like cars, celebrities are deployed even when clientele is known to be more discerning and also that the endorser does not actually use the product himself. A newspaper report observes: ‘You will hardly find Shah Rukh driving out in an i- 10 from a movie studio or to an IPL match unless of course he paid to do so. Yet car companies rope in Bollywood celebrities because they represent the target market that the company needs to address and also add that extra bit of zing to their promotions…The one positive of using a correct celebrity for a product is that one doesn’t need to establish the image of the product as it is personified by the celebrity himself, said Shahshank Srivastava, Chief General Manager Marketing, Maruti Suzuki India Limited…Take the case of Shah Rukh, who had been roped in by Hyundai to first promote the Santro Xing, their entry level car. After the company chose…had its global launch in India it needed to differentiate it from the clutter and we thought that a celebrity brand ambassador, who matched the target market for the product, would be a good way to create a buzz. And SRK who had already been with the brand seemed to be a perfect fit with the product said Arvind Saxena, Director, Marketing and Sales, Hyundai Motors India Limited…The i- 10 was positioned as a global, innovative,
stylish car to appeal to the 25-44 year age group and SRK with his tyle quotient appealed to the young…(21.10.11. The Telegraph Auto companies here celebrities as brand ambassadors the highlight the qualities of their wheels – Anasuya Basu).

In the case of Shah Rukh Khan and his implication within a discourse of consumerist utopia of a globalizing India’s middle class via repeated casting endowed him to attain a certain filmic persona that came to feed his stardom and his personal image. His biography too supported this image and privileged his iconization. He came to represent the particular identity myth of upwardly mobile, smart, educated, acquisitive, consumerist, cosmopolitan, hybrid, urban of middle class urban India. He represents the desires, anxieties, dreams and even the limitations of this burgeoning consumer-myth driven group, viz the new middle class with his insinuation within a particular filmic discourse (as explored in his middle class genre films) and star biography.

While it has become a common practice to add value to a brand by forging an association between a celebrity/star and deployment of such idols as informed by marketing wisdom and strategies, it is interesting further as in the case of stars like Shah Rukh, where the model star himself signifies iconicity within contemporary times. His symbolic value as a hero representing a particular consumerist appearance, pleasure seeking drive and acquisitive temper is further re-informed in consonant myths represented by the consumer brands and products for which he endorses. Looking at the construction as an icon the star’s engagement in advertisements are equally relevant as his engagement with films though the latter remains the principal one to his star-identity. It may be argued that association with star image is doubly gainful for brands. At the first level while it remains a propagandist method and seeks an easy identification of the brand, with star, as an endowment of certain attributes and virtues for which the brand aims to stand for. At the second level, the brands embedded within an ideological discourse of consumerist myth gainfully conjous with the star image of Shah Rukh, whose personal and film biography has successfully reproduced him on similar grounds as a cultural icon of his times, albeit in the domain of the popular. Like consumer brands acting as vessels of self expression, imbued with particular values held dear by a society, becoming iconic identity brands (Holt 2004 p 3-4), cultural icons like Shah Rukh embodying a discourse, representing certain myths and values have emerged as an iconic cultural brand successfully deployed, reproduced and circulated by market forces. This involves what Holt calls as cultural branding (ibid p5). Cultural branding applies particularly to categories in which people tend to value products as means of self-expression, that includes clothing home décor, beauty, leisure, entertainment, food, beverage, cars etc. Marketers usually refer to these
categories as lifestyle, image, badge or ego-expression products. The brand myth is embedded within the product (ibid p5). The construction of the star within a consumerist discourse of global capitalism favours his association with brands located within similar discourse.

Iconic cultural brands provide extraordinary identity value since they address the collective anxieties and desires of a nation. We experience our identities, our self-understanding and aspiration as intensely personal quests, but when identities are seen as collective, in the aggregate, it is seen that these desires, aspirations and anxieties are linked to the notion of a collective identity and is widely shared by a large fraction of a nation’s citizen. These similarities derive from the fact that people construct their identities in response to the same historical changes that influence the nation. Holt argues citing an instance from the realm of the popular culture in American society and observes how in the economic and political crisis in the 1970s Ronald Reagan emerged as a cultural icon, representing a masculine identity that served to reinvigorate the nation. His war cry invoking America’s frontier myth received America ideals of manhood (ibid p 6-7).

It may be argued that Shah Rukh’s repeated casting with in a globalizing nationalist discourse, his star biography and his extra-cinematic commercial ventures accorded an iconicity to his image that served to reaffirm the capitalist ideology within which the very logic of his endorsement campaign (for brands) is located. Posturing of the star, who is an icon a cultural brand himself, as a successful, glamorous, charming, achiever and most importantly an aspirational figure (Holt, 2004, ibid p 7) allow consumer brands to reproduce a straight forward status appeals by associating with the star. As an iconic brand himself the star performs identity myths aspired by the larger community of nation’s middle class consumers. This myth upholds the cultural fabric of the nation and sustains collective faith in ideological values and goals of a given society. Academic research demonstrates that extraordinary appeal of most successful cultural products has been due to their mythic attributes, and as Holt argues that these icons provide a wide ranging pantheon from novels to films. Schneezegger and Stallone as iconic brands have performed similar mythic function (ibid 8).

Shah Rukh as a brand performing myth of success, pleasure consumption upward mobility has a corporal materiality. As a cultural symbol, like all iconic brands, his corporality with its sheer distinctiveness is a material embodiment of that myth. It includes his smile, his countenance, his torso, his gestures, his walk, his voice, his mannerisms. So his association with a brand along with his corporality and its unique endowment within a discourse facilitates consumers using the product to experience
and partake a bit of myth he represents and the glamour he corporally embodies. The secular myth of consumption serves to address the collective national identity of consumer citizens, through mostly urban, middle class.

The significance of Shah Rukh resides not in the very myth alone, but its relevance as a new recipe for the anxious middle class in a changing socio economic discourse governing post-liberalization state policies. The success of his iconocity lies in the fact that the myth supported by his image is in conjunction with the present context. However, cultural (iconic) brands like the star are constructed within a wide ranging intertextual domain that spills beyond media. The star as a discursive construction gives credence to the collective imagination and myth of the nation.

Coming back specifically to the star’s association with consumer brands it can be said, that being a cultural brand by his own rights, the star delivers to the endorsed brand a powerful myth that customers might find useful to construct their identities (as consumers). The myth metaphorically delivered by the star is likely to enhance brand distinctiveness, reputation, status, and identifiability (see Holt, 2004). The identity myth is mediated via star embodiment. The star connects the consumers to the brand and acts as a cultural and symbolic expression of the specific of the brand, its cultural content and myth. For instance, Shah Rukh’s sculpted spectacularised body symbolize the adornment of male body offered by Onn of the brand Lux Cozi. Cultural production in the model of capitalism, often fail to take sufficient note of the dual nature of the circuit of cultural commodities. A product is not just materially produced but draws from already existing cultural elements. (see Johnson, 1996, p 91). The products cultural circulations beyond its production within a capitalist economy, is best illustrated in advertising campaigns where the cultural image of stars/celebrities are accorded to the product. The product gains cultural meaning through its association with well known celebrities whose symbolism and iconicity is well accepted and known to people’s imagination.

The acquisitive cinematic image of Shah Rukh and his biography of a successful trajectory of ascendency gets celebrated and reinforced in his deployment in advertisements that are basically amend to address an individual needs, choice and often appeals to hedonistic instincts. The appeal of advertisers premised upon the ubiquitous market idiom and also premised upon the freedom of the individual for self determination is a common anthropology that understands the individual as autonomous rational, resourceful and acquisitive. Reinforcing this anthropolgy is the idiom of the market (Hunter et al 2002 p 339-340).
A very interesting way of Shah Rukh’s deployment in ads – is his off said verbal appeal – acting almost interpellatively within a whole panoply of seductive goods ‘and …not only for fast track finishers but also as encouragement along the way. The consumer goals are meant to justify the means …Consumerism becomes an end in itself…(Barthel, 1992, p 142). That is how Shah Rukh says for the ad: Wish Karo..Dish karo (Dish T.V. ad: wish and wish for Dish) Advertisers call this as mass marketing individuality where the star appeals to the individuals craving/desire for a mass product. Across various ads done by Shah Rukh from cars to toothpaste from men’s inner wear to mobile phones, what runs common is the masculine attitude of demanding the best and achieving perfection through looks, possession, mastery, skill, ownership, intelligence etc. for various products. It cars is an extension of phallic masculine power (see Barthel , 1992 p 144-145), choice of vests reflects means for a good shaped fit body and choice of gadgets his intelligence etc.

5.3.3 Shah Rukh Khan: As a Masculine Sign as Constructed Within Gendered Advertising Texts

The representational character of the world was radically reaffirmed by the proposition that meaning is inherently textual and conditioned by the location of a term in field of texts. This was known as intertextuality and the great influence in exerted in the field of cultural studies owed much to theencle philosopher Derrida. Derrida submits that no meaning exists outside of the system of signs. Because signi only have meanings in texts, it follows that our world and perceptions are inherently textual. Contesting earlier philosophical claim Derrida asserted that nature is not prior to, or external to culture. On the contrary, it is nothing but the inscription of culture upon what is represented as Nature. Inscription, in the sense that it is treatable as an object or can be accessed through texts (signi systems), and texts are cultural products. Nature is now read as culturally defined and therefore culture is intrinsic to its meaning. This amounted to a dramatic rejection of the proposition that meanings are fixed, unified and beyond dispute. Hence meaning become inherently mobile and more liable to change (Rojek, 2007 p.50-51) Equipped with this argument of cultural defined meanings, it can be said that male bodies and masculinity are culturally inscribed. Instead of assuring male bodies and masculitivity as inherently naturalized they are to be seen as texts (sign systems) and as texts they are cultural products, culturally defined and culture is intrinsic to its signification. As masculinity can be coded, metalingual codes of dominant discourse encodes the ‘masculine body’ as gendered and heterosexual (see Thwaites 2002 etal).
Our commonsense understanding of masculimony tend to naturalise the concept and unproblematically embrace it as a social fact. However in recent years, researchers in the field of men’s studies have shown masculinity as constructed within a given sign system. Within a symbolic sign system masculinity and femininity are constituted and coded as oppositions. This notion of masculinity as sign (Diana Saco, 1992. p. 23) This takes us to the question of advertisements where both male and female models act as signs. Gender that constitute social identity is a symbolic category. Gender ascribes subjectivities onto humans. It constitute part of ascribed social identity which is not automatically given, but coded. Gender as sign ascribes a certain identity. (ibid) Advertisement reliant on signs and symbols, ascribe gendered identity on the model appropriate to that which is being advertised.

Though not just unique to SRK alone, this section explores how the star’s presence within advertising texts have been gendered. Shah Rukh’s presence in advertisement codes that star as a gendered subject - as suitably ‘masculine’ to endorse the product or as demanded for the promotion of the product’s brand value. The gendering and its representation is mediated through symbolic sign systems or advertisement codes. Research dealing with advertisements shows consistent evidence of high degree of stereotypical presentation of gender roles. Compared to gendered portrayals on other medi representations. The ones in advertisements are for more blatant. This is largely because advertisements or advertised products are specifically aimed at target male and female audiences, thus resulting in a higher level of sex-role specificity. (Craig. 1992. p 13).

As masculimony and male sex-roles are cultural specific and contingent on their spatio temporal dynamics, advertisements portray men in view of their appropriateness. The product targeted at a particular class or status group (of men) is related to the question of habitus, taste and preferences. The gender and class component are intelligently enmeshed within the marketing appeal of advertisements. Shah Rukh’s appeal used by different products, deploys his acting image differently to produce a class and gender specific image commensurate with the product. In Emami Fair and handsome, in a sub-urban, middle class attire sporting a thin moustache and Safari suit, he prods a ‘Pahelwan’ (wrestler) not to apply womens’ fairness cream but apply the ‘Mardowali’ (masculine) cream. In car ads he does an upperclass look and a certain machismo that favours a certain hedonistic consumerism, while in ads of family products like Toothpaste (Pepsodent) or Home Point (Nerolac) he plays a carrning father.
Craig argues that advertisements have reinforced gender stereotypes as well as gender-based division of labour. While women are mostly seen as mothers or housewives, men are shown to be more autonomous, engaged in different occupations, and therefore mostly shown in ads of alcohol, vehicles, etc. (ibid). Shah Rukh’s advertisements for products like cars Santro and i-10 Hyundai, Dish T.V. and Airtel as for electronic and Satellite-based products, Home paints like Nerolac reinforce the autonomy and decision-making power and also resourcefulness of men. It also typically reinforces gender stereotypes in the sense of men having requisite expertise and authority, as being objective knowledgeable about reasons for buying particular products, as occupying autonomous roles and also being concerned with the particular practical consequences of product purchases (ibid. p. 15).

Goffman’s analysis of gender displays in advertisements is frequently a valued consideration. Goffman argues that performance of gender in social situation is analogous to the display of gender in media texts. The actor or model who displays a particular gender is distinct from the character or subject produced by the picture. The subject is what the picture or representation is about, what is produced by the picture. According to Goffman, the gender display an actor makes is evidence of the actor’s alignment, which Goffman defines as cited “the position [the actor] seems prepared to take up in what is about to happen in a social situation”. Gender displays are socially functional as they tell participants in immediate context how an actor (a person) wishes to be identified. Information about human beings as subjects (and hence social identity) is encoded in such displays often these displays are ritualized and can be learnt to be read as displays of gender (e.g. masculinity) (Saco. 1992. p. 26-27).

Shah Rukh’s representation in media texts like advertisements is aligned to produce and encode such an image or body as ‘masculine’ that agrees with the character and usage of the product. In advertisements of TMT-rods(Concast) Shah Rukh exposes his robust muscular hand, as demanded by the marketing needs. However, his masculinity is distinct from the working class labouring body, it is a designed, sculpted muscularity of the rich.

Imaging men and masculinities are seen as mutually inclusive of one another. Images and imaging involve reference to culturally as signed meanings of looking, showing, being shown and looked upon. The very notion of image is premised upon such cultural processes of working and showing, which themselves look upon images. There is both gendering of imaging and imaging of gender. These processes of representation and signification are not confined to formal media but exists even in social practices.
Images are (only) produced in their consumption and so looking and imaging are equally gendered (Jett Hearn, et.al., 1992. p. 216-217). The image of the star is imaged through the cultural codes of capitalist consumption. The body is imaged and represented both as spectacle generating desire of consumption and as a masculine agent of persuasion and seduction. In advertisements he is both a consumer endorsing a product and allowing his image/body as equally consumable. The start/body is both consumer and consumable and is a semiotically inscribed site/text.

According to Derrida’s concept of intertextuality the meaning of each sign is expressed through ‘presence’ and in doing it excludes or repressed other meanings or by rendering other meanings absent and this is how language works. As Derrida regarded language as always and already metaphorical the distinction between presence and absence carries somewhat more than a purely technical meaning. (Rojek. 2007. p. 52). It can thus be argued that the attribution of masculinity, the gendering techniques in ads seeks to exclude the contribution and repress position of all that is held as ‘non-masculine’. This distinction between presence and absence has strong implications for political understanding and practice. ‘Meaning is never truly sovereign as it invariably contraces ‘traces of other meanings in the sign system and may be further subject to change. The absent meanings may disrupt the ‘sovereignty of a sign by announcing their presence in someway’ (ibid. p. 52). In several ads. of Shah Rukh, not withstanding the gender stereotyped masculine image that the advertisements seek to build up, contains traces of what is not ‘masculine’ and even what is even not ‘heterosexual’. In Emami Fair and Handsome, when the star urges the muscular wrestler to reframe what is ‘feminine cream’ and apply the male cream, it fails to hide that fairness is a virtue that is not gendered as both men and women aspire for it and tries to cosmically attain the same.

Gender coding in advertising can be explained with signifying advertising texts involving ‘organization of signs into conventionalized and regulated sequences of meaning that turn the contingent result of an historical process into naturalized cides or myths. That is, a cultural code is a system of representation by which signs and their associated meanings are arranged by convention to stabilize significance’ (Barker. 2002. p. 38). Representation of masculinity was naturalized and cultural myths of such naturalized masculine expressions have been upheld in ads by advertises an dShah Rukh’s coding is no exception to this gendering.

Gendering of the make and male body is subject to what Faludi calls ‘ornamental culture’ that signalled the end of utilitarian role for men. Shah Rukh’s posturing in ads
subject to this culture represents a commodifiable, consumerist and exhibitionist
manhood Barker argues: ‘Ornamental culture is rooted in no kind of society at all, let
alone one in which men are called upon to be useful. Instead of a culture founded in
utility, this is a culture of celebrity, image, entertainment and marketing, all
underpinned by consumerism. In this context, masculinity becomes a matter of personal
display rather than the demonstration of the internal qualities of inner strength,
confidence and purpose, Manhood has become a performance game to be won in the
market place, where, amongst the more merchandisable poses of contemporary
manhood. … and appearance - of youth, money and aggression comes to define

The deployment of star to promote gender, specific (men’s inner wear, men’s fairness
cream) and class-specific (cars, mobile phones, electronic gadgets, watches of global
brands) can be subtly exclusive and in its phatic function address male and middle class
with access to the codes. It phatically excludes non-males, and those lacking means to
participate in exchange of signs (If films can phatically address a large segment across
class gender territory, linguistic divides, advertisements can be narrowly phatic
(Thwaites et. al 2002. p. 18-19).(see notes 2.)

Most often than not, Shah Rukh’s representation in various ads have functioned as to
reinforce the masculine hegemony, marking male control over resources (gifting
jewellery, good house paint/decoration to his woman in Geetanjali jewels. Nerolac
paint, Décor furnishing etc). Thus, the ads are analysed as a form of cultural
communication and a carrier of social myths, in particular, the myths of masculinity
(Strate, 1992 p 78-79). His positioning in ads that charms his woman with his fragrant
presence (Lux soap), his body prowess in Concast TMT bar, his careful parenting as a
responsible father in Pepsodent etc. reproduce myths in various ad texts.

Myths according to Roland Barthes, are not falsehoods or fairytales, but uncontested
and generally unconscious assumptions that are widely shared cultural notions,
naturalized, and not contested as historical constructs. Advertisements, as myth is a
form of cultural communication, tht reasserts such socially held notions and culturally
constructed structures. The myths of masculinity is naturalized, reinvented and
manifested in myriad forms of mediated…communication(ibid) SRK in commercials
postured as per pre existing cultural conceptions of man – with virtues sfs of ideal
masculinity valued by contemporary society, community, family and nation.Howeve,
care is taken to construct his image and appearance via visual and verbal symbols and
commensurately associate them with the specific products. For brand and image are
closely aligned in construction of ads (see Barthel, 1992 p 137). For example, if the star
flexes his professionally contoured arm muscles for TMT bars, to show the strength of the product, contrastingly in ads of electronic goods, satellite TV DTH (Direct to Home) Service of mobile ads, he verbally delivers a man’s intelligence to understand the utility of quality technology products. Consumer goods thus reinforce ideas of socially constructed notions of gender/masculinity (ibid p 38). The star’s masculinity contingent on product is constructed across a wide spectrum of machismo to more cerebrl type.  

However, gender codes of fashion change (see Barthel 1992 p 138). Shah Rukh’s fashion code as a male model in most ads of suits or clothes involves a gentleman, somber, conservative dressing as seen in Belmonte and many other ads. This at times looks starkly different from his filmic roles seen in sporty, trendy clothes (as in films like DDLJ, KKH, DTPH, K3G, KH, Mohabbatein, OSO and so on). This gentleman like look is also projected in ads of alcohol, watches, gadgets is that of a corporate man. This ‘corporate conformity’ accords him the look of ‘The new achiever…Merchandisers, advertisers, and retailers loved him. This new achiever was a challenge, but he could be sold. He is one of capitalism’s most successful products: a consumer and a gentleman…He is the existential executive. He either stares out confidently at the camera or seems lost in his own deep, important thoughts…The backdrop to his activities is a panoramic view through a skyscraper window of other corporate towers. This is a common advertising technique, which tell us that the man modeling the suit is a high-powered executive able to buy and sell…both literally and figuratively. If there is furniture, it is either expensively modern, sleek and avant-garde or more often polished old worldly…’ (Barthel, 1992, ibid p 139).

Shah Rukh’s ads for luxury items (Décor along with his wife Gauri) in formal wears in plush interiors, for Royal Brendalcohol in corporate as well old world splendour in conservative dressing style are the various gendered corporate images of an idealized idol upheld by the capitalist market and merchandisers/retailers in consonance with the liberal economic regime’s open market policies and rising opportunities of mobility for educated aspiring middle class.

Such construction of the star in corporate dressing also services two gendered function. Firstly it is an attempt to re-masculinize in face of women invading such centers of power (ibid p 140). Barthel, citing (Wright Mills brings forth the importance of men’s appearance to look successful and ability to display what creates impression of a successful man (ibid). Instead of many of his filmic look with casual sporty wear, SRK’s appearance informal sartorial codes provides impression of an ambitions man looking to climb the corporate ladder – making him appeal to the right target customers/buyers of products like formal men’s clothes, watches, perfumes,
investment offers etc. all standing for upward mobility – linking themselves to status symbols that legitimate their recent mobility (ibid p 141). Shah Rukh’s smart posturing doing these symbols –coveted possessions of the upwardly mobile middle class. The star’s own biography as a successful climber in the film industry also give further credence subliminally albeit at the subtextual level.

Shah Rukh’s ads besides reinforcing gendered assumptions are not static and has accommodated in its representations attractions and departures towards redefined masculine role. For instance the ad that is famously Pappu and Papa (of Pepsodent) toothpaste shows how today New Man – is a new father with a close tie with the son. ‘Men’s liberation has emphasized the need for men to invest themselves emotionally in relationships. This need was frustrated by the strait jacket of traditional expectations regarding the strong, silent male. The old stereotype meant that men grew up never really knowing their fathers, never hearing them say they loved their sons. The old stereotype meant that men had a hard time expressing deep emotion, whether with friends or with loves. The emergence of the New Man was meant to change all that. It has changed appearances in some advertisements. Dad has broken his silence…The New Father wants to spend quality time with his children …’(Barthel 1992, ibid p 146-147).

The man as Shah Rukh is shown in Pepsodent ads is the New Man – the New Dad who bonds warmly with his child, emotes and does not feel inhibited to show his fondness and be playful. He is purged of the anxiety to lose his firm, stoic, stern masculine control – he is more confident. This role of the star in such ads as the New Father draws or benefits largely from star’s biography – his private/family life of his close bonding and affection for his children Aryan (son) and Suhana (daughter) and his fond cherished reminiscence of his childhood days and his memories of his loving parents. Anupama Chopra’s documentary film on the star and all his biographies (Sheikh, Chopra, Ghosh, Gehlot) and his media interviews are replete with his statements on his role as a loving father and his own loving parents.

Not only a New Father, the star in his endorsements suit what has come to be known as the New Man who emotes, who is indulgent, carefree, expressive, flamboyant, affable, and not just serious and stoic. All of this does not rob him of his masculine strength, despite dispelling earlier image of being stoic and composed. The star’s flamboyance, his stylish flair, his call for pleasurable consumption, makes him the ‘New Man’. ‘The New Man is a gift to advertisers…The old masculine definition of the serious, uptight & male stoically shouldering family responsibilities was challenged by a new philosophy…Men of the nineties continue to feel they have the right to self expression
and self indulgence, to love and to be loved, or at least, to fool around a bit. Advertisements suggest ways to facilitate the process’. (Barthel 1992 p 147-148).

There can be several illustrations of SRK as the New Man, uninhibitedly emoting (or romancing). Shah Rukh’s well known biographical fact of his much vaunted blissful marital life (his secular/romantic love marriage to Gauri Chibba – his adolescent sweetheart culminating in a successful marriage) and his successfully popular casting as a romantic hero, have been appropriated in ads like Nerolac and Décor. While in ads of Nerolac environmental friendly paint he is shown as a protective husband caring for his pregnant wife in the ad film, in Décor he is cast with his real wife Gauri with a perfect choice for home furnishings, where their role as a perfectly showcased couple is metaphorical association.In the ads like Huundai i-10 he acts as a man who woos his lady love by driving the car and in Lux soap (an ad that was released along with the film of Yash Chopra Jab Tak Hain and draw the pairing from the film between SRK and Katrina Kaif) where he romances. Shah Rukh’s biography and filmic casting has privileged his role in ads, as protective husband, responsible spouse, and even as true romantic lover boy. Notwithstanding his role as the New Man in ads. SRK’s image has also given itself to a ‘feminization of culture’, inadvertently encouraged by ads – making men hostage to it ‘as it puts all potential consumers in the classic role of the female, manipulable, submissive, seeing themselves as objects…men’s advertisements similarly promise that female attention will follow immediately upon purchase, or shortly thereafter…Along with this process, men have been encouraged to use a whole range of beauty care products that have been primarily associated with women. Precisely because these products are so similar to women’s products, advertisers rely heavily on language and visual symbolism to convey the impression that these are men’s products’. Retaining masculine virility, masculinity and perfection of masculine bodily traits, devoid of all that is feminine, these products while protective of the male ego are mostly where ‘Cosmetics become “skin suppliers” and “grooming gear” Hair permanents are sold to promote “Manly Look”’. (Barthel 1992,ibid. p 148-149).

Shah Rukh’s ads for Male Fairness Cream, Himani Body Talc illustrates his image being hostage to a feminization of culture, where the narcissistic male ego, the virile male body without forsaking its ‘malehood’ seeks female attention, wants to look attractive and desirous. These products traditionally associated with women, asserts heavily on caption or how the star calls it as Mardo wali cream (masculine cream – quintessentially distinct) from the female product or that ‘men require more’. In these ads care is taken in protecting malehold of the star as a campaigner of male products.
The star’s posturing his dialogue seeks to assuage male anxiety from being able to prove his essential malehood and the product. Whatever the approach of gendering remain in ads- the masculine aura of competence is sustained in the messages conveyed. The male model, as do all like the hero exudes a masculine aura, ideal masculine traits desired and desirably related to the products. As masculinity is an institutionalized fact – it is part of cultural codes and language. ‘The promise of power is at the centre of a network of conventional characteristics: authority, self assertion, competitiveness, aggression, physical strength ….a certain style of behaviour, an outward presentation…..an internal self image.’ (Tolston, p 8). Therefore all accommodative changes produced by the New Man are to be seen as hegemonic repositioning of the male (heroic) ideal in face of democratization, women’s emancipation, gender equality as a right etc. The hero/star services as a hegemonic device to re-adjust to a new gendered role without letting loose male authority, prowess, competence, virility and smartness.

5.4 THE DISCOURSE OF ADVERTISEMENTS, GLOBAL CAPITALIST CULTURE AND ITS IDEOLOGY OF CONSUMERISM

The institutions of the culture ideology of consumerism, as articulated through transnational mass media, are the primary agents in the cultural ideological sphere. This involves three primary agents that reproduces the practices of global consumerism. First, the transnational capitalist class produces the political environment within which the products of one country can be successfully marketed in another. Second, the TNCs produce commodities and services necessary to manufacture and sell them. Third the culture ideology of consumerism produces the values and attitudes that create and sustain the need for the products. These distinctions are analytical than empirical and are inextricably mixed in real world.

The cultural ideology of consumerism is largely promulgated through the transnational corporations involved in mass media and advertising. The cultural ideological goods of the global capitalist system purvey their products via mass media, entertainment and popular culture to an expanding global market, enabled further by national boundaries growing increasingly meaningless. Their goal is to create a ‘buying mood’ for the benefit of the global troika of media, advertising and consumer goods manufacturers.

Mass media is a potent ally of global capitalism, accelerating the circulation of material goods through advertising and also leads to what Estheinon Madrid, as cited, calls as ‘creating the political/cultural demand for the survival of capitalism’. The systematic blurring of the lines between information, entertainment, and promotion of products
lies at the core of this practice. The culture ideology of consumerism is not new to the First world or world’s comprador classes. Instead, it is a reformulation of consumerism and transforms all the public mass media and their contents into opportunities to sell ideas, values, products, in other words a consumerist world view. In all the culture ideology of consumerism has a formative influence on the trajectory of global capitalism.

Consumerism and its ideology, its rationale for continuous buying and spending capitalism fails. It is the very ability of this ideology to commercialize and commodify products, ideas and images via television images advertisements, newspapers, books tapes films and so on that global capitalism approvals to survive (Sklair L. 2000 pp 64-69).

Globalization involves market. A global market comes to exist when a product is distributed and gold in a transworld space via a coordinated supraterritorial business strategy. This enables consumers dispersed across the world to concurrently purchase the same good or service, often under a single brand name like Pepsi –Cola or Toyoto and the enormous range of global commodities are various transborder products that have come to figure in our everyday lives of most of humanity, whether through actual purchases or through unfulfilled desires evoked by global advertising (Scholte 2000, p 51). In other words global capitalism not only produces and circulates goods in the market but commensurately creates a consumer ideology that sustains it and finds expression via mass media.

Nick Stevenson argues that globalization ‘replaces a hierarchical national culture with one that is depthless, kitsch, and placeless…Old national hierarchies that sought to bind time and space through literature, history, heritage ceremony and myth have been replaced by spatialized communication flows. Vertical national traditions have become floating signifies in a mediated horizontal global culture’. (Stevenson 2003 p 175-176). Questioning the link of cultural citizenship with an integral participation in nation life, he alerts us to an emergent post modern version of the same. Cultural citizenship is being re-inscribed by questions beyond national membership (ibid 177). He argues. The self definition of community was until recently thought to be the primary responsibility of the nation state. However, the legislative force of the state and ideas of community have become progressively decoupled…people are increasingly becoming citizens through their ability to be able to purchase goods in a global market; hence citizenship becomes less about formalized rights and duties and more about the consumption of exotic foods, Hollywood cinema. Brit pop CDs, and Australian wine....global
citizenship involves practice that enable us to consume other cultures and places distant from our own (ibid. p 179).

The ideological context of globalcapitalist consumerism, its transnational flows, market logic, commodifying energies, and media propaganda provide the backdrop against which the star’s endorsements, and advertising engagements need to be posited. Liberalization enabled the entry of the capitalist market forces that appropriated the star popularity and charisma beyond films to further their commercial interests.

An important target of consumerist culture is the youth and in commodifying this youth culture and Karen Brooks observes that: ‘By capturing and (re) producing contradictory but finite identities for young people, the idea of youth is harnessed and sold as a commodity that is attractive and available to consumers of all ages. The mechanisms of commodification suppress and objectify the liminal nature of teen spirit and create an endorsed and desirable youth market... when young people’s bodies (and minds) enter into the market place, they are appropriated commodified, and consumed. On the one hand control over the way in which they are represented appears to lie within …market forces…authoritarian producers and distributors such as the media advertising executives, stylists...who might attempt to represent the best interests of their youthful clientele while simultaneously seeking to meet the desires of their potential audience. The potential audience is, of course, not simply the young people, but a range of consumers encompassing diverse ages, classes, cultural backgrounds, and gender....Many television commercials and music videos purporting to be about ror for young people serve corporate and public interests by selling back to the predominantly adult market images of youth that confirm the stereotypes disseminated and maintained by a hegemonic cultural pedagogy that can be imitated and consumed by audience of all ages, perpetuating and commodifying what the dominant market forces imagine youth, in all its manifestations, to constitute. The commodification of young people represent(s) an invigorated referent for a mid life consciousness aggressively in search of acquiring a mere youthful state of mind and lifestyle... Youth as a commodity is the ultimate cultural elimix, transfigured and marketed to an ageing population as a panacea for social and psychological disease. Through particular modes of production and imagery, corporate society harnesses the essence of youth and sells back to the adult culture an antiageing formula...The obsession with youth and the commodification of a specific period of a subject’s life in order to artificially recapture and sustain it can be understood in terms of “cultural necrophilia”...In the process of youth and youthfulness are transformed into another form of mass consumption…” (Brooks 2003 p 1-4). The deployment of
SRK an youthful hero, an embodiment of youthful exhuberance, energy and spirit as seen across his filmic roles and public appearances is turned to a commodity to target the audience desirous of savouring youthful consumerist pleasures. The star’s well retained youthfulness through his well maintained body, toned skin and his persona holds the promise of youthful pleasure by aligning himself with various products of consumption.

Appadurai’s ideas on production fetishism and fetishism of the consumer is of immense worth to understand how the consumer ideology through spectacularized media images obscures reality and creates a conducive milieu for consumption, leisure and spending. He says: By production fetishism I mean an illusion created by contemporary transnational production, that masks translocal capital, transnational earning flows, global management, and often faraway workers (engaged in various kinds of high tech putting out operations) in the idiom and spectacle of local control, national productivity and territorial sovereignty... various kinds of free trade zones have become models for production at large, especially of high-tech commodities production has itself become a fetish, obscuring not social relations as such but the relations of production, which are increasingly transnational. The locality (both in the sense of the local factory or site of production and in the extended sense of the nation state) becomes a fetish that disguises the globally dispersed forces that actually derive the production forces. This generates alienation (in Marx’s sense) twice intensified, for its social sense is now compounded by a complicated dynamic that is increasingly global'. He adds: ‘As for the fetishism of the consumer...The consumer has been transformed through commodity flows (and the mediascapes, especially of advertising, that accompany them) into a sign, both in Baudrillard’s sense of a simulacrum that only asymptotically approaches the form of a real social agent, and in the sense of a mask for the real seat of agency, which is not the consumer, but the producer and the many forces that constitute production. Global advertising is the key technology for the worldwide dissemination of a plethora of creative and culturally well chosen ideas of consumer agency. These images of agency are increasingly distortions of a world of merchandising so subtle that the consumer is consistently helped to believe that he or she is an actor, where in fact he or she is at best a chooser’. (Appadurai, 2000 p 329-330). The deployment of star popular to the local/national constitutency masks the production process and global dynamics endemic to global brands. The aura and charisma interpellatively creates a sense of consumer agency. Thus, it may be argued that Shah Rukh’s campaign in favour of global brands renders his engagement complicit with product/commodity as well consumer fetishism.
5.5 CHANGE IN CULTURAL ECONOMY OF FILMS - GLOBALIZATION AND ITS IMPACT DIASPORIZATION AND VISUAL CHANGES UNLEASHED AND THE INSTANCE OF THE STAR, SHAH RUKH KHAN

Hindi cinema appeared as a popular register of globalization in India. The specter of India incorporated that became part of global political parlance in the 21st century was in the making throughout the 1990s, and Indian Popular Cinema underwent profound changes in that decade. In retrospect, the transition of the 1990s proved to be a productive period for Bollywood as it coordinated and rearranged its various generic orientations to adapt to an increasingly neo-liberal attitude towards economics and culture. Besides naturalizing the free-floating Non-resident Indian in roles typically played by Shah Rukh repeatedly the NRI hero served as an essentialist cultural signifier, Bollywood popularized various capital driven phenomena in India including basket ball (the game and the brand merchandise associated with it) a was seen in Shah Rukh’s Kuch Kuch Hota Hai (1998) and Valentine’s day as was also seen in another film of SRK, Dil to Pagal Hai (1997) opening up the market for new cultural merchandise. Interestingly it was Bollywood again that popularized regional parochial traditions like karwa chaunth and dandiya among pan Indian audiences, and turned them into commodified celebrations of cultural capital. The greeting card industry that uptil the 1990 was limited to Christmas, New Year and Brithdays began mass-marketing cards and merchandises for the Indian festival, many printed in vernacular. Gobal; brand names like Adidas, Nike, Diesel etc were unabashedly displayed for the first time in the 1990s, and by turn of century all awkwardness related to on screen product advertisement was gone. Here instances of films like Dil to Pagal Hai (1997). Kuch Kuch Hota Hai (1998), Phir Bhi Dil Hai Hindustani (2000) featuring Shah Rukh in the lead are among the notable films with in-film ads. In these films the display of imported /global brands appeared seamless . (Bhattacharya-Mehta 2011 p5). The changes unleashed by globalization was notebaly that of diasporization, and consumerist ethos and its visual vocabulary. The recurrent casting of Shah Rukh predominantly in such films rendered him to be a cultural (and also visceral) signifier of such a change. This also secured his image, body and persona to be concluded in a language of global consumersist culture, therefore, facilitating the star to seamlessly straddle from films to ad. Shah Rukh emerged as vehicle for the Indian middle class progressively eager to catch the next train to global capital (ibid). The image invested and embedded within the culture of commodity and consumption readily adduced itself to the new temper of ads. The mood of advertisements and product placements in television programmes moved away from a contrived old world elegance to an equally...
contrived ethnic cliché catering to the viewership an image of affluence previously unimaginable (ibid p5). In a significant number of post-global Bollywood films affluence rising out of globalization and India’s presumed role in it became the diegetic signifier for national value or pride (ibid) wherein consumption and an opulence marked the affluence as its perceptible visual index. This affluence found a more realist articulation in advertisements endorsing a wide array of good marking a definitive rise in the living standard of the new middle class and a rise in their disposable income directed towards consumption. Shah Rukh’s repeated casting in urban affluent diasporic roles in several post-global films or his casting as a desirous ambitions urban youth (in films like Raju Ban Gaya Gentleman(1993), Yess Boss (1997), Duplicate (1997), Phir Bhi Dil Hai Hindustani (2000) give further concurrence to his image in advertisements – endorsing in favour of consumer’s wish fulfillment.

Ranjani Majumdar writes about two of the significant films of Shah Rukh viz Dil To Pagal Hai and Kuch Kuch Hota Hai where advertising becomes almost diegetic and intrinsic to the narrative. She observes: ‘Dil To Pagal Hai reveals in the spatial exploration of the department store the gym, the designer bed rooms of the two man protagonists and the theatrical performance space, Coke, BPL television and beer advertisements are now strategically placed in a mise-on-scene that is seamless in its movement...Karan Johar’s first film, Kuch Kuch Hota Hai (KKHH) became the biggest hit of the year...a dazzling display of interior and natural landscape is deployed to depict teen life, adult romance, and marriage rituals...very similar to that found in New York City and in Dil To Pagal Hai...KKHH uses the basketball court to create ambience for the display of teen fashion. All around the indoor stadium we see brand names on bill boards and bonners. Cars sportswear, shoes, and the like are all advertised through this sequence. Anjali for example, is meaning a DKNY shirt...we are shown a range of teen sport and casual wear attire ...The interior of the college provides one of the most striking images in KKHH...reminiscent of teen television shows in the United States. One corner of the set has aDJ with his equipment. A bright yellow pay phone, a Pepsi machine..Karan Johor’s own version of the school space was highly influenced by American popular culture...Cable television’s circulation in the last ten years in India with U.S. shows and MTV programming, has only added to the proliferation of international signs. Kuch Kuch Hota Hai evokes a sense of spatial coordinates that link with representations from comic books, international design manuals, television advertising...Designer, wear, brand names, and product placement add to the panorama of the interior, reinforcing what Hal Foster refers to as the permeability of design in contemporary capitalism. The terrain of romance and desire
works through the circulation of commodity signs and design, expressing the cultural values and attitudes of the youth. Design in KKHH is directed product of popular cultures of consumption, and the role of advertising is one of the most significant influences...Foster suggests, we now need to speak of a political economy of design. The landscape of KKHH in many ways expresses the euphoric language of design that is so central to contemporary capitalism’. (Mazumdar 2007 p. 128-134).

The pronounced indictment of the star within a consumerist visual vocabulary of films makes his deployment in advertisements appear more naturalized as a referent. While most leading stars of the Mumbai film industry are engaged in advertisement, SRK’s claim to perhaps the largest share of advertising assignments (along with Bachchan and some well-known Indian cricketers) is not to be seen in isolation from his filmic casting, as there is a continuity or a spill over from films to ads or vice versa.

5.6 REALITY SHOWS ON TELEVISIONS BY SHAH RUKH KHAN

Compared with traditional culture, modern culture, Rojek argue is super-dynamic where genres come and go in tremendous speed. In genres that have become internationally popular are television in reality shows where ‘existing fame is magnified and repositioned. More interestingly people plucked from the rank and file are elevated, however temporarily into stardom. The suspension of the … between celebrity ascendance and the audience exposes questions about the nature of tame and the ‘docility’ of consumers. Reality T.V. operates by staging improbable combinations of people in confined situations and recording the results’. (Rojek, 2007. p. 13)

Shah Rukh’s engagement in popular television (reality) shows allows him to recast his image and popularity vis-à-vis the ordinary people. These shows bring him closer to the people (audience) and herein a kind of ‘routinization of charisma’ is noticed where the otherwise myth and aura of the star is differently used in bringing them close to the ordinary. Such shows according instant stardom to ordinary render ‘stardom’ closer to reach. Conversations of the star, SRK with the participants in T.V. Shows like Kaun Banega Cororpati (KBC) in an easy endearing style, defying all that sets apart the star from the ordinary acquires new meanings for the millions aspiring for fame and mobility.

Rather than reflecting reality, ‘Reality TV reflects how rituals of behavior designed to convey reality are performed for TV transmission and consumed in consumer culture…’ (Rojek, 2001. p. 15). Shah Rukh’s engagement in endorsement campaigns sees him using his star power to provide consumer items and commodities. But this is not confined to consumer items alone, he is part of such shows where simulated reality is
transmitted for its images to be consumed Reality shows are veritable audio-visual sites of consumption where like advertisements star power is used.

There is no difficulty in recognizing that television is a global phenomenon in its production dissemination and viewing pattern and even grows everyday. The phenomenal growth of television market worldwide need to be seen as integral to globalization. Barker urges that television may be considered to be global in terms of:
(i) the various configuration of public and commercial television that are regulated, funded and viewed within the boundaries of nation states;
(ii) the technology ownership programme distribution and audiences for television that operates across the boundaries of nation states;
(iii) the world wide circulation by television of similar narrative forms and discourses. (Barker, 2002. p. 134).

In addition to globalization of television technology, Barker notes the synergy and convergence in global television in the context of wider transformations in the communication industries. Technological progress and coupled with market changes has contributed to the convergence (or erosion of boundaries) between organizational sectors and thus the creation of global communication giants’ (ibid). This synergy convergence and de-regulation is particularly important in terms of its impact in India following post-liberalization.

The global circulation of Shah Rukh Khan is therefore more of a television mediated and televised representation. This involvements in reality show, television-interviews and chat shows advertisements and films shown in television render him globally known and recognizable. These programmes are part of growing globalization or transnationalization of local and national programmes. And despite an early dominance of U.S. controlled media. a growing number of nations are producing an increasing proportion of their own programming and indeed, there has been a distinct move towards regionalization of markets on the basis of shared language, culture and historical trade links and that there are a number of ‘geo-cultural markets emerging’ Further, these markets are not necessarily bounded by geographical space but involve Diaspora populations distributed world-wide. (Barker, 2002, p. 138). Globalization of local/regional television programmes are channels that facilitates transnationalization of celebrities and stars as true for Shah Rukh Khan also. It is also one of the most pujajar means beyond films, that allows Diaspora to gain visual access to the star.
A new conception of the family as one the key areas of reading and of cultural codification of TV is beginning to leave behind the trite irrealistic conception of the relation of TV and family – with TV as the corrupter of family traditions and philosophy that attributes nothing more than entertainment function to television. The mediation that daily life of family exerts on television is not, however, limited to reception. It is present in the discourse of television itself. Beginning with family as the space of close relations and proximity, television carries out two key functions :one is simulation of contact and rhetoric of direct communication.

Simulation of contact entails all those of mechanisms through which TV specifies its mode of communication organized around the ‘phatic function’. This function of concentration around interpersonal relations is important because of the dispersion of attention in the intimate daily life of the private home in contrast to the personal isolation and concentration of attention in the public atmosphere of darkened cinema. The emphasis is not upon psychological dimension of the experience but on the perspective of cultural anthropology viz the eruption of the world of fiction and the world of show business entertainment into the routine of daily life. Given the contrast between these two worlds, intermediaries emerge in the formats of TV to facilitate the transition from daily reality to the fictional world of the entertainment of spectacle .

Thus television provides two basic models of intermediary the personality who is somewhat distant from the fictional world of popular entertainment – the ‘master of ceremonies anchor person or most and the colloquial tone’. (Barbero 1993 p 216-217).

Keeping in view the kind of communication that TV forges and the contact simulated through the mediation of the intermediary host, brings to give the kind of de-escalation the star personalities engages in from being a distant figure of aura to someone who appeals to the family as the TV host. This rhetoric of direct address, Barbero argues involves devices that organize the space of TV around the axis of proximity and magic of seeing in opposition to film dominated by distance and magic of seeing. Films as archetype of transfigured realities despite drawing spectatorial involvement and fascination provided in close-ups of personalities, film spectators are kept at a distance. In contrast to the space of the film, so alluring precisely for its distancing, the space of the TV is dominated by the intimacy of seeing, with a proximity constructed by means of montage that is sustained on the basis of a real or simulated direct shot. The experience of TV watching produces a sense of immediacy that also characterize daily life. The practice of TV watching allow spectators to gain proximity to the characters and events and through a discourse which makes everything familiar and transformes even the most strange or distant objects into something very close - (Barbero ibid P
When Shah Rukh and stars like him come to TV and hosts programmes rupturing their distance and aura into a simulated contact some of direct address and familiarity – brings the star closer home. It poses of something like ‘routinization of starry charisma’. Instead of playing a role the star as himself engages himself in a more direct, realist communication circuit. Through ‘TV’s neighbourliness’ (Hermes 2005 p 9) the star forges a link with a large number of people in a more direct mode of communication privileged by his position as a host or anchor of the programme of TV show. Bringing home into private space of the home, the public image of the star at a particular time in a specific programme sees him invading our everyday routine life. It leads to a certain privatization of the public image of the star in shows like KBC where he directly engages in a communication with the family audience and participants (on the set itself). Television programmes broadcast by privately funded channels allow for what is an independent social space that is outside state monitoring and control (Berger et al. 2002 at p 28) where stars like Bachchan and SRK in reality programmes communicate and address a cultural citizenry (Hermes ibid).

Shah Rukh’s anchoring in T.V. shows like Kaun Banega Crorepati after his attainment of stardom is different from his acting as a young T.V. actor in mid-80’s in serials that became quite popular with the audience all over the country. Notwithstanding, this hiatus bound to both time and his status, what remains is how he is mediated via the small screen and invades the private/domestic space. Like the television and its awful omnipresence of communication the star becomes for the people a household name. Invested with this power of communication circuits, into which people are drawn the star acts as a vehicle – making incursions into people’s mind and interior space. Television rendering the star ubiquitous makes him a tool to draw in the glamorous discourse of stardom into people’s private life, where he is not an actor but after many years arrive on the screen as a star (see, Docker 1994 p 104).

Unlike other stars like Bachchan, Salman Khan, Govinda and several others making forays into small screen as real stars than as actors, for Shah Rukh it was a re-incarnated avatar. From a newcomer, modest T.V. actor to a star and his reappearance though apparently disparate does narrate obliquely his tale of success and fulfillment of middle class drawn.

5.7 PUBLIC/PRIVATE PERFORMANCES AS STAR/PROFESSIONAL ENTERTAINER

One of the most profitable extra cinematic engagements of contemporary Bollywood stars are touring performances. Event management companies deputed to organize
such shows are also able to ensure ticket sales and raise funds required to cover costs. These Bollywood ‘StarNites’ are highly popular and are organized throughout the year in different parts of the globe. As this form of business has proved to be very lucrative, most stars are attracted to this and most of them tend to earn more from stage shows than films. These stars are seen to be globe-trotting, for the best part of the year. In addition to this, these performances have raised awareness about Bollywood cinema globally. (Bose. 2006. p. 99) Apart from global touring performing troupes of Bollywood some Bollywood stars are also known to perform at private events. Derek Bose observes ‘Rising income levels have led to ostentations of family and personal events, like weddings and birthdays, by the nations nouveau riche. The family weddings of certain diamond merchants leading industrialists and media celebrities, organized entirely by professional event management companies are indicative of the times to come ….. Even getting film stars to dance and entertain for price is arranged by them …’ (ibid p. 99-100).

The star body of Shah Rukh Khan providing performative moments in ostentations family celebration in diasporic films in a neo traditional mode to invite diasporic capital seeks spill over also into real life. It leads to a internmeshing of the cinematic and ‘real starry weddings’ for instance the ‘Star presence’ at weddings like when Shah Rukh Khan attended one of India’s topmost industrialist Lakshmi Mittals’s daughter’s wedding. (Gera Roy. 2011. p. 46)

A popular film magazine reports: “Over the years in Europe and the U.S. private stage shows are growing. These Bollywood shows allow star earnings to grow in competition with each other…. It is believed Shah Rukh who has become selective about 2-3 films a year and yet affords to spent huge amount in buying a bungalow is only possible through his world touring performances… Throughout the year popular stars of Bollywood, Shah Rukh Amitabh, Salman, Akshay Kumar… have been known to perform in NRI organized shows mostly held in New York, London and Toronto. These are all well paid sectors for their huge remuneration. As per trade guide stars like SRK and Salman does 10-14 shows per trip. In per shows heavy weight stars like Amitabh, Shah Rukh, Salman, Rani, Juhi… earn 20-30 thousand dollars a year…” (Anandolok 21/8/99; p. 75-76).

Previously, heroes and heroines desisted performing in shows and kept themselves aloof - confined to closely guarded inner circles of private lives and industry. Studio set, outdoor location, filmy parties and beyond these they remained out of reach. In 50’s and 60’s stars believed that showing their faces in ads would damage their image,
aura and glamour and would be treated as available. Looking at the history of public performance by Hindi popular films stars one can name Raj Kapoor who in a sense crossed the boundary when in public in Moscow capital of former USSR responded to an applauding and cheering crowd. Later Dev Anand shared some of his mannerisms on Film Fare Award Ceremony. But all these instances were amateurish. It was towards late 80s that Bachchan began a new episode of show business and began by performing with his female co stars or singer Kishore Kumar’s troupe on stage mostly abroad in various halls of London, New York etc. What began with play back singers doing touring performances, aligned with stars to glamorize it further the industry soon professionalized it. When shooting schedules are not on Stars go for such shows. These shows are now being sponsored by multinational brands.

The tradition of participatory spectatorship in Hindi films directly feeds into its complementary act of reperformance that accounts for practices such as imitation, mimicry and identification. Reperformatve spectatorship allow audiences to re-live what they select as key moments of pleasure by recreating and enacting song dance dialogue etc and this provide a cultureal valence to cinematic signifiers in urban social and public space. This practice also creates a shared visceral and phenomenologicf al memory of cinema, where cinema as part of popular culture is reproduced and perpetuated with certain cinematic elements being replayed (Broker 2005).When the rich and powerful invite the very stars to perform in their private space it re-situates cinema in an altered form of public-private culture. The publicness of popular is re-appropriated by the star-body to be reperformed in a private space. Such replaying of performance re-commodifies the star for the rich and powerful.

5.8 ENTREPRENEURSHIP VENTURES OF SHAH RUKH

Unlike stars of earlier years contemporary Bollywood stars are more actively engaged in activities related to film beyond acting more as a business or entrepreneurial venture. While earlier male heroes like Raj Kapoor. Dev Anand. Dilip Kumar did make forays into film making the current trend is markedly different. Bose (2006) remarks : ‘An indicator of the times to come is the way actors nowadays are effortlessly switching to producing and distributing their own films, lab owners are becoming exhibitors and distributors are turning producers and vice versa’ (p. 35).What is meant today by entrepreneurship by film stars in the age of neo economic regime was pioneered by Amitabh Bachchan’s. ABCL (Amitabh Bachchan Corporation Limited). In an interview he says : ‘I though how to capitalise on this enormous popularity of Indian cinema and reach the international market via not any isolated effort but through a
professional entertainment organization and help Indian entertainment industry to receive world recognition… ABCL’s aim is to create a corporate discipline in this hugely promising industry and help it to acquire international recognition…’ (Anandolok, 15/5/1999) p. 17-18

A revolution has taken place in the world of entertainment with the coming of corporate finance and recognition of the film industry by the state. In addition to their was the prospect of recuperating revenue from overseas market through distribution and exhibition of films and circulation of film music. The report of Film Federation of India sounded ecstatic over the business prospects of the industry and its proliferating market profits. Film starts like Ajay Devgan, Sanjay Dutt, Shah Rukh, Aamir and Salman ventured into production and film business.’ (Anandolok 13/5/2000 p. 31-34) The changing cultural and political economy of film production engaged film stars as entrepreneurs in the film business.

The market ideology and consumerism seeks to promote itself through media and its popular faces, wherein celebrities like Shah Rukh emerge as a key purveyor of global capitalist consumer market in a post liberalized India. However, the star features not only as a chosen face as part of promotional strategy, but his success enables him to rise to opportunities rendered open to him to launch his various entrepreneurial ventures. Shah Rukh was reported also to have collaborated with a Dubai-based real estate developers TSA group, with an intended project to raise SRK Boulevard, an 8 million dirham (Rs. 105.6 billion) project spread over 3 millionsquare feet on Ras Al Khaimah, Dumah. A foreign based luxury home for the actor, his private enclave beyond India, opines the star would reflect his vision about life and home. “For me, life is a celebration” said the star.

The developers chose the star with the right iconic stature to construct the high end luxurious space. The grand project unvisages the stars proposal of technological amenities, recreational and sports facilities, including two premium signature tunes, buxry hotels, commercial complexes, under water discotheque, sea front, sporting space etc. This venture of constructing lifestyle enclave with foreign based firms takes SRK’s business interests to a different level – distinct from his endorsements, IPL franchise ownership, ownership of his banner Red Chillies Entertainment that produces advertisements and films and even his stake hodlding (10%) in channel E24 promoted by Bag Films. (Live on SRK vbxdsq jpg).

His entrepreneurial skills have earned the name of “SRK inc.” as a star who not just a successful hero, The king of Bollywood but also as one who is also building a business empire (21.2.2010 Business Today cover page). It calls him the richest star of
Bollywood with multicrore stakes. His stint in film production through his companies Dreamz Unlimited (2000) and Red Chillies Entertainment (2004) that includes both ‘Big Banners and cutting Edge Movies’ include: Phir Bhi Dil Hai Hindustani (2000), Chalte Chalte (2001), Ashoka (2003), Main Hoon Naa (2004). Paheli (2005). Om Shanti Om (2007), Billu (2009), Ra.One (2011) and now the about to be released Chennai Express (2013) in collaboration with UTV Movies The star has risen to the opportunities opened up by Bollywoodized culture industry and its sustained marketing/production opportunities for films, merchandising and other ancillary forms related to the changing cultural and political economy of films in post-liberalised India.

5.9 SHAH RUKH’S ENGAGEMENT IN IPL - THE ‘INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE’ CRICKET

Sporting events are being ritualized and are seen as occasions of mass participation in social values and dominant beliefs. In recent times commercialization of sports have allowed media to generate greater hype, excitement and increase participation. Michael Real, as cited, sees the Super-Bowl American Football as a mythic spectacle and ritual and calls it a perfect marriage between sports and electronic media. Super Bowl is therefore a communal celebration of socially dominant emotions, lifestyles and values. Ronald Cunningham, as cited observes “The essential aspects of American sports are basic expression of the American cultural pattern... The very forms of our sports indicate dominant temporal and spectral national features. If the hunt was the central expression of sport in pre-industrial state of nature, America with its expansive landscape and assertion of a private relation between man and nature, then baseball, football, basketball and the like are the central expressions of an urban, technological, electronic America reflecting its concern with social structure and impersonal relationship…” (Sequira, 1991, p.121-122) The Super Bowl recapitulates in miniature and with striking clarity certain dominant strains in the society in which it was born and that takes such delight in it. As a mythic spectacle Super Bowl has developed a vehicle for reinforcing social roles and values in an advanced industrial state. The structural values of the Super Bowl summerised by Michael Real as cited is: “American Football is an aggressive strictly regulated team game fought between males who use both violence and technology to win monopoly control of property in the economic gain of individuals within a nationalistic, entertainment content… The Super Bowl serves as a mythic prototype of American ideology and a ritual collectively celebrated’ (ibid, p. 122-123).
Drawing an analogy between the Super Bowl it may be said that the franchise-based, privately owned cricket as represented by Indian Premiere League (IPL) cricket has come to represent an apogee of commodification of sports and the entry of large capital, glamour and pomp into the game of cricket in India.

Sports marketing is a global phenomenon and its growth in India primarily led by cricket over the last thirty five years has been incredibly high as much as higher than the global average. The total sports marketing in India has been estimated to be Rs. 11,700 crore or $ 2.6 billion, two-thirds of which (Rs. 7800) is by that of cricket and as per this estimate, more than half of this ‘cricket kitty comes from the Indian Premier League (IPL)’ (Balasubramanian et al. 2011, p. 3-4). Cricket one of the most popular games in India has the largest share of sports advertisement. In addition to this in other sports marketing aspects including sponsorships, league momes, player earnings etc. cricket owns a share as high as over two-thirds of the total. And for long, especially since 1980s, cricketers have been endorsing in favour of cars, bikes, colas, health drinks life insurance liquor besides sports product. (ibid. p.4-5). The prolific commercial potential of cricket, its popularity and its marketing have been attributed mainly to television viewership in India (ibidp.5). In India sports which is almost synonymous with cricket due to its prolific marketability have enabled what is ‘the biggest and latest sports marketing innovation in India, the Indian Premier League (IPL), which has interestingly fused cricket, Bollywood and business to create a multibillion dollar market.’ (ibid. p. 8)

In this section, I would like to explore how Shah Rukh’s journey as an actor quite fascinatingly turned him to a sports entrepreneur. A reigning icon in films as well in advertising an expanding celebrity culture almost inevitably drew him towards it where crickets marketability met and coalesced with that of the star’s own marketable value. The combination of the two was perceived to be a lucrative proposition for both ends. In a liberalized market this can be seen as infusion of a new brand viz. Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) of he IPL termed as ‘Indian profit League’ (ibid) where brand SRK cobined his marketing value with that of cricket already known for its mammoth share in global sports marketing.

Television media and international brand was already a ‘potent combination to drive money into sports marketing’ with young cricketers benefiting by being launched in product endorsement. (ibid. p. 14). As cricketing celebrities had already had a reasonably long engagement in advertisings campaigns, it made film celebrities, like Shah Rukh, Preity Zinta, Shilpa Shetty and so on known as ‘brand-ambassadors’ in the
realm of advertisement, take an easy stride towards sports (cricket) entrepreneurship. Fighting for advantage in consumer and brand marketing in the cola market in India both Pepsi and Coke launched campaigns that brought cricketers and Bollywood stars together as endorses in unison. (ibid. p. 61) The biggest campaign was by Pepsi that brought in Sachin Tendulkar, the legendary Indian cricketer with SRK. It was also that cricketers like Gavaskar, Sandeep Patil had made forays into Hindi films and the formation of IPL can be argued to be ‘the eventual merging of the cricket and entertainment industries years later’ (ibid. p. 15).

In an emerging market like India, a nationalist view of a sport can be limiting For the sports market in India to expand, it cannot be just about Indian cricketers, it must make room for international cricketers and international sports… Non-players have much a role to play in sports as players do, though more off-field than on.’ (ibid. p. 19).

It is this logic that worked to draw Indian and international cricketing talent and non-playing entrepreneurs like Shah Rukh and so on. Commercial relevance of cricket. India’s rising cricket ranking, best cricketing talent, capital and India’s potential of sports market has facilitated the formations of IPL, in conjunction with each other. Shah Rukh’s entry his role as a league owner allow him to reach an apogee of stardom, where he is not only constructed as a star persona or as a star by the entertainment industry or as a commodity by the advertising media but where he applies his agency to undertake business ventures by turning his constructed brand image and stardom into his own capital. Shah Rukh turned himself as a ‘delivery vehicle’ (ibid. p. 36) or purveyor of marketing commercial cricket. This entry has formalized the bounding between cricket and Bollywood. Turning a full circle, as an entertainer turned entrepreneur Bollywood stars joining cricketing business has cemented this relationship through IPL. Advertising media, global companies sponsorships, global television media, Bollywood stars, formation of transnational teams, sub-national representational nomenclatures (Mumbai, Indians, Kolkata Knight Riders(KKR,henceforth), Rajasthan Royals, Delhi Dare Devils, Pune Warriors, Chennai Kings etc.) makes the IPL a packaged cricketing entertainment departing from standardized format. It meant cricket league to function as club franchise system, engaging high profile business men and actors for franchise ownership and putting up world class cricketers on auction.

To the dismay of many purists cricket’s transition from competitive nationalism to pure entertainment involving presence of names like Shah Rukh, Preity Zinta and Shilpa Shetty provide the tournament high publicity through media. The IPL drama around the bids and player auctions was based loosely on the US-based National
Football League draft, which is a complete media event in US but ‘The fact that leading film stars were invoked in the IPL gave it an Indian twist… The presence of Bollywood did one more thing for the IPL. It made the IPL an achievers club, with the result that people paid lots of money to buy clubs. It was a status symbol, the new private island. This attracted a lot of very successful businessmen who for commercial and personal reasons wedded to show their peers who the boss was in their hometown. Not everyone could have known at the stage whether the IPL would be a business success, but the presence of celebrities at least guaranteed a certain media value and status” (ibid. p. 147-148).

The present avatar of cricket in India, termed as IPL has emerged as a site for the rich and famous celebrities and entrepreneurs to brandish their wealth powers and status. For Bollywood Superstars like Shah Rukh besides being a status enhancer to his already consolidated position in the top legion of Indian film Stars, it also had other implications vis-à-vis his public image and film promotions.

In 2007, the success of Chak De, where he plays a coach to a national women’s Hockey team and succeeds in securing a world championship allowed his film biography to acquire a ‘sporting character’ in favour of the stars overall image. His purchase of an IPL team worth more than Rs. 300 crore” (Arora, 2008. p. 48) drew a definitive credence from his film biography. Looking at the reasons for SRK’s entry into cricket Arora argues: ‘It came as big surprise for cricket lovers when they were made to mull over the news that Bollywood’s bigwig Shah Rukh Khan has purchased one of the Eight IPL teams. What really compelled this tinsel town hunk to purchase an IPL team … Initially it was difficult to comprehend the reasons for SRK’s entry in cricket. However a little pondering… it wasn’t that difficult to gage what might have prompted Khan to be a part of Indian cricket. Ironically SRK who kept shouting from the roof tops about promoting the cause of Indian Hockey… through his superhit flick Chak De India in 2007… Now, why Chak De Cricket, and why not Chak De Hockey, Mr. Khan? This is the time when it really needs a crowd puller’ (Arora. 2008. p. 48. Arora’s contention has an under priming by the fact that the star choose to capitalize upon his ‘sporting image’ in the film, where he was supportive of hockey in real life turned to cricket purely for its popularity and fiscal potential.

A star discourse intersects with a large public domain and this allows them to ‘spill their effect’ much beyond films, since this standom becomes part of nation’s social, political and economic discourse. Arora argues further to establish how ownership of IPL gave the star an added advantage to promote his films and also a competitive bid to project his financial might among other Bollywood stars and also settle his personal
score with his critics. He observes: “SRK’s involvement in cricket is either a smart
move by an intelligent business man in him or it has to do something with recent spat
between BCCI and SRK following remarks from the Board’s president Sharad Pawar.
We need here to recall that Khan’s persistent presence and his activities in the stadium
during the T-20 World Cup matches in Malaysia forced the BCCI chief to comment
that the former was trying to utilize the opportunity for promoting his film Om Shanti
Om which was due to release at that time. What made people believe was the fact that
his co-star Dipika Padukone accompanied SRK in every game where he was present.
Some say Pawar’s critical remark and its subsequent fall out in media and public lent
buoyancy to Khan to foray into world of cricket. Opinion makers say SRK was not
willing to take Pawar’s remarks lying down under. As a result he might have decided to
be an authoritative part of the game by owning a portion of it. This is reflected in his
investing and building up the team Kolkata Knight Riders. You mess with Baazigar and

While it might be argued that the star’s decision was informed by his both business
wisdom and his initiated by his personal choice, desire or aspiration, it was also IPL
that was equally beneficient. Presence of such icons ensured viewership of their
frenzied fans and with cricket’s popularity forging ties with the ‘glamour and cinema
world’ allowed ‘to sell more and more tickets and pull more and more crowd to the
stadium . . . Crores of money in IPL iced with Bollywood’s glitter and media support in
totality has indeed made the cricket a perfect saleable commodity that no consumer,
specially the youth, could resist from enjoying at least once. Meanwhile IPL has
indeed for the moment given a new dimension to the game of cricket. It’s going great
and has endeared the glamour loving crazy youth with its sheer mixture of glitter,
glamour and game.’ (Arora; 2008. p. 53; 56). The alignment of cricket with the charm
and charisma of film stars render IPL a kind of hybrid entertainment typical of post
modernist times - wherein the conventional cricketing vocabulary flexibly incorporates
changes that has it’s roots in Kerry Packer’s purposed formula for modern cricket (see
arora. p. 54-55). An altered format that included auctioning of players, hard core media
manoeuvering and vibrant publicity method, a mega successful business venture.. with
the big money that rained from various business houses’ (Arora. 2008. p. 55; 56). can
be read as postcolonial transformation and transformation of the colonial game of
cricket. Postcolonial India, under the influence of globalizations reflected a readiness
for what may be seen are ‘Toning Down the National Passion’ and ‘with foreign
players allowed to take part in the IPL format ferocity for the national passion is bound
to die down in due course of time. The reason is simple, frequent interaction with
important members of rival teams and having … on and off the fields will lessen the sense of passionate desire to win… Billions of rupees pumped in IPL has already started showing its colours with several Australian players openly expressing their desire to play for the IPL teams even if it comes at the cost of playing for their own country. A survey conducted by the Professional Cricketers’ Association of England says that nearly 97% of state level players and 50% of international level players have expressed their willingness to take early retirement in order to make themselves available for IPL bidding (Arora, 2008, p. 51)

The transnational formation of cricketing league often prioritised over national game heralds a significant departure and hints towards rising relevance of global media capital and business ventures wherein national boundaries and national competitiveness appear to be undermined in the name of business and entertainment. The T-20 format of the game, its transnational - character purely commercial imperatives is a postmodernist intervention where in the game besides being bowdlerized also privileges entertainment over nationalist zeal. The ‘postcolonial and postmodern transformation’ (see, Ashcroft, 2012) of the game of cricket its its IPL avatar and the involvement of business elites and film stars signals in favour of a more fluid, transnationalized site for entertainment. Entertainment redefines itself within an altered rubric of cricket turned glamorous, less rigorous de-nationalised, and more instantaneous (compared to long hours of both test and one-day national tournaments).

Shah Rukh’s involvement in the business of cricket besides adding an entrepreneurial dimension to his extra cinematic ventures affirms his image as a global celebrity owning a league of cricket which is transnational in composition.

If films and advertisements gained by commodifying SRK’s image, the management of his cricket franchise (KKR) involves him differently. Proprietorship of franchise enables the star to bid for cricketing talent as IPL allows for ‘projecting the players as consumer items that could be traded easily. Franchisees unhappy with performances of their icon players have begun exploring avenues to sell them off. Franchises have indicated that the players could be traded to some other teams when IPL trading window open’ (Arora, 2008, p. 57). It is also argued that the game with its altered idiom is what ‘is now a big trade where any investor could easily pitch in and players are their employees who have to yield as per the intentions of their masters or prepared to be sacked and traded to other organizations… the company had every right to hire and fires persons… If a franchisee has invested its hard earned money it will also like to see the outcome. And if the result fails to square up as per his intentions players and management are bound to be on firing lines. No business person will like to lose his
money and if that happens he will miss no opportunity to fix the snag. He is more interested in obtaining to fix the snag. He is more interested in obtaining the mechanical results from the team.’ (Arora. 2008. p. 58) Thus, capital-empowered businessmen and Bollywood glitterate turned entrepreneurs like Shah rukh have applied business professionalism in both corporate style of franchise management and in placing ‘rigorous demands for absolute success in business’ (ibid. p. 58) leading him to even expel under-performing comic cricketers from his team like Saurav Ganguly. ‘Such are the workings of cricket Inc’ that even performers and professional actor like Shah Rukh seeks to discipline the team and place high expectations for delivering good performance and hence monetary returns for his investments, turning down considerations that performance are not always consistent. The carnival of cricket, IPL, a post modern, postcolonial avatar of the game is more than a game. Besides monitoring performance standards. Bollywood stars have entered the stadium and even the field to both cheer their respective teams and brazen display of pride of ownership. The cricketing arena provides a popular and a populated site during IPL matches for film stars especially franchise owners to remain in public gaze and memory independent of whether their films are being released or being successful or not. This allow stars to draw both media and public attention. Arora observes:

‘SRK’s over indulgence with players while throwing all rules and regulations to the wind, he believes being an owner of the team he can even enter the dug-out area, followed by his dramatic SMS. Having owned the teams and purchased the rights owners like Shah Rukh Khan and Priety Zinta consider the players dressing room and dugouts as their fiefdoms. The Bollywood biggies had apparently overrated themselves and assuming that every moment of their would evoke public applause for them… SRK’s emotional SMS to the team members was perhaps more to do with his self image building than a motivational thought for the players. Or why the entire text would be made public via media which is always on the look out for a spicy edge… he was well aware of the forthcoming unavoidable defeat and KKR being left at the post in the race for the semis, the businessman in SRK was quick and smart enough to see through a gain in the loss. He missed no time to cash in the opportunity (of KKR’s defeat) by attempting to stir the people’s sympathetic chord through his emotional and self styled ‘punishment’ by the players. He tried hard to make a good business by investing his image to gain public sympathy and acceptance, after all a cine star’s major gain lies in his publicity. And who else better than SRK could understand this’ (Arora. 2008. p. 67-68).
Cricket if seen as masculinized national game as Nayar doubts (Nayar 2008 p14), looking at IPL’s format one can argue that it has robbed it of its colonial and later nationalist trappings and rendered it into a marketable, packaged entertainment. In a professional style, Shah Rukh’s role in the IPL has not been confined to ownership of KKR franchise alone, but has seen him being engaged in multifarious interface with the public domain. This includes his negotiation with the team members, its management as the franchise owner, his public appearance amongst the larger audience as a cheering team owner with his celebrity friends and family, his comments and public posturing and his relationship with the larger popular culture of city life, especially Kolkata the home town of his team.

What is interesting is the energized body of the non-sporting owner in the cricket ground. His famous somersault at Cheepauk stadium at Chennai and The Telegraph reports: “Brand SRK goes KKRAZY” (30.5.12). Following the victory of KKR in IPL V, the star was seen in a jubilant, ecstatic, celebratory mood at the Edens Garden where the state led by the Chief Minister Ms Mamata Banerjee felicitated the team and franchise owners amongst a musical programme attended by a teeming audience and a large number of celebrities and film stars from Bengali film industry. The programme witnessed the sporty body of the star and the performative (dancing) body of the star. His showmanship and energized performance with the Chief Minister standing next, received thunderous applause from the crowd gathered at Eden beating the sultry afternoon. Called as “The Knight Dancer”, Shah Rukh Khan danced at the Eden Gardens making his moves that made 119.999 Calcuttans dance to his tune. Amongst a state conducted felicitation, one could see the star walking, waving, running, singing, bowing, climbing, dancing, screaming. A houseful Eden lapped up his every move with a full throated cheer of Shaaaaah Rukhhh!..I owe you SRK responded. Amidst great fanfare the event was celebrated with local celebrities. KKR owners team members, the Chief Minister and her ministerial colleagues..(30.5.12 The Telegraph). With the state supporting and organizing an event that betrayed the charactersing solemnity of state sponsored programmes and more of a chaotic revelry was equally significant for bringing to fore the face of a truly peopled democracy amidst a collapse of guarded boundaries between the state and the popular culture, the superstar and the crowd. The state led by the newly elect government with its much avowed mandate of a common person’s government, a government committed to change (or paribartan) showed a prompt alacrity to appropriate the popularity of the star and moment of KKR’s triumph to spearhead its agenda of reasserting its popular manifesto and its democratic fervor by a sheer inversion of somber protocol underlining statist officialdom. The report writes
Writer's in rejoice mode (ibid) the CM’s secretariat was seen to be in an unusual mode basking in popular overtures directed at the star led triumphant team. Declaring a free entry for all, thousands waited for hours coming from far and wide to join the victory pageant. Amidst state led function with ministers SRK and his team was honoured. The SRK magic also cast a spell on bureaucrats and officials. The Star’s exhuberance in public in cheering the team extended cinematic glamour to the whole event.(ibid) It was a rare moment that brought the state and the common people to a rare occasion of public ovation for a star led team, a star seem to embody the popular face of state led democracy. The Times of India, a popular daily reads the event with headlines: CM Turns Emcee. In Brand Bengal Show: Didi Holds Durbar on Knight Coronation – Enthusiasm of Govt Matches Fan Frenzy (The Times of India 30.5.12).

Infact the star’s brand value has been an important component towards the success of his team KKR. From being underperformers in earlier series to the magical victory of the team in2012 was highly appreciated when read by eminent ad gurus and advertising agency directors, like Alyque Padamsee, Prahlad Kakkar, Padamsee attributed it to Brand SRK that has gone into the making of Brand KKR. Kakkar hails it as SRK’s marketing genius, he says: ‘KKR’s brand value has soared post the win…all thanks to Shah Rukh Khan the marketing genius.His personal endorsement clients were the ones who had put their marketing muscle behind KKR and now all the promises that he has been making to them come true. All these years, Shah Rukh Khan was a bigger brand than KKR but after Sunday night, the brand value of KKR has shot up and almost become equal to Shah Rukh’s.’ Reiterating almost the same note, Agnelo Dias, Chariman and co-founder Taproot Indra said ‘…KKR also had the advantage of being associated with a powerful brand like Shah Rukh Khan. In fact, there is a lot of similarity brand wise between KKR and Shah Rukh. Both have been outsiders who have come in and made a name and established a brand value for themselves’. In the same report, CEO, Future Brands, Santosh Desai draws a similar parallel between KKR and Shah Rukh – their successful marketing and brand building Desai says: ‘Among all the teams in the IPL, KKR has always been the one that has been marketed best. They have a strong business model …there is a certain clever way in which they have gone about choosing their players, especially this season. They have resurrected themselves and scripted a dream run, all thanks to the fact that they now work in the team as a unit…Shah Rukh’s presence has always given brand KKR the much needed fillip all these years,…The way forward for Brand KKR is that they have to keep doing what they have been doing…There is the classic under dog coming right on top story and that’s what makes a valuable brand’ The report continues: ‘..That so many people
turned up at the stadium was because of Shah Rukh Khan a senior official said’ (30.5.12. The Telegraph p 19).
Interestingly, it is KKR ownership that allowed Shah Rukh to forge closer ties to the sport loving city of Kolkata, with a history of sport passion, its people and most importantly with the state of West Bengal and its popular hegemonic impulse to appropriate the star to fulfil its proclaimed mandate. The discerning agency of the star to choose Calcutta, well known for its sporting passion yielded results. A report says: He had said that he had always admired the culture of sport in Calcutta, especially the way they backed their soccer clubs with such passion. Clearly he hoped for similar passion towards his team something Calcutta has generously provided over the ups and downs of the last five seasons. Since then, the bonds have strengthened and Shah Rukh’s bonds with the city have extended to involvement in events like the Kolkata International Film Festival and Brand Bengal. ‘After this win …that the bond between KKR and Shah Rukh and the city will just go to another level’ (29.5.12, The Telegraph metro p17. Small gestures hard decision and an amazing run in IPL 5). The city gave what the daily said King’s welcome for the Knights an event organized by the state and keen initiative of the Chief Minister marked by gourmet delights, honour, musical programme by eminent Bangla Brands (Bhoomi, Chandrabindu and Dohar) at the Eden Gardens. The city on the other hand celebrated in various public spares that included might clubs, roadside dhabas and even street corners (29.5.12) The Telegraph metro p22).
What is interesting to note that the star’s charisma and charm coupled with his Brand value have been a lucrative entrepreneurial venture for the star businessman and KKR franchise owner Shah Rukh. And even his consecutive failure to match the financial success of his films with his contemporary male stars/actors like Amir’s 3 Idiots and Salman’s row of success with Dabbang, Bodyguard, Ready. Wanted and so, have not eroded his stardom as venturs like IPL(and even brand endorsements) keep him in circulation, pre-empting him from settling or receding to oblivion. The star image receives fresh boost and reinvigoration in his appearances made during the IPL and his active role in managing his ownership stakes.
The parallel between Shah Rukh’s biography and the midele class non-filmic background is replayed in the IPL saga and its rise from being mediocre to the victor. Shah Rukh’s brand image and ace entrepreneurial skills revived the Brand KKR against odds: The deep association and involvement of the star owner, mobilising his own brand value, the supported of his personal endorsements as sponsors led to what Anurag Hira coowner. One By One Design Private Limited observed as:’ There is
hardly a visible line between Brand SRK and Brand KKR …Brand SRK is arguably a
money spinning entertainment monolith that brands will jostle for to get a visible logo
on his team’s jersey’(30.5.12 t2 The Telegraph, Cover Story, From Underdogs to
Champions From Hype to Hurrah. The country’s top Ad Gurus Tell t2 How Brand
KKR Just Went From Big to Huge)
Locating Shah Rukh the icon of a globalizing nation, within the bounds of IPL. serves
as perfect cultural site marked by collapse and fusion of political boundaries of nation,
status and all those categories that seek to divide us. Following the victory of the team
in the finals illustrated a moment of popular celebration transcending all parochial
divides with the coming of the state, the common people, celebrities from
entertainment and sports onto the same platform. The rambunctious celebrations may
have brought a disapproving frown or two from the less flamboyant, but the charge
that the chief minister should not have showered so much attention on players who
were essentially not from the state is contrary to the very “melting pot texture of the
IPL”. The report observes:’In fact, it was a fine, unparochial act by the chief minister
to felicitate the Delhi bred, Mumbai based Shah Rukh Khan, Mumbai’s Punjabi girl
Juhi Chawla, KKR’S co-owner…Pakistani Wasim Akram, Delhi boy Gautam Gambhir
and a host of non-bengali who brought cheer and honour to the state’ (3.6.12 Celebrity
Cirens SRK’s kiss too far Bharathi S Pradhan P15 The Telegraph 7 days).
The IPL ground, the stadium empowers Shah Rukh Khan the franchise owner to
perform his stardom, display physical feats like cartwheels, somersaults and dance, and
display his control over his playing team KKR. IPL has re-defined Shah Rukh’s
stardom. Building up the team marketing the team and managing it draws from what is
part of his real life trajectory and his ascendancy from an TV actor, a middle class
Delhi youth, without genealogical antecedent in the industry emerging successful as
one of top heroes of the Bollywood filmdom. His role in the film Chak De, as Kabir
Khan seemed to be a reinvoked filmic image in his IPL ventures, especially his role on
the grounds the day his team won the finals of IPLV. His presence allowed his stardom,
his filmic persona to enter into active engagement in the game of IPL’s cricket. ‘As he
stood there, hand raised in triumph…in the Chepauk stands, he looked less Shah Rukh
Khan and more Kabir Khan. The coach of the women’s hockey team in Chak De！
India who had fought many difficult battles – personal and public – to steer the gang
of girls to victory in the world cup for the country…At times a motivator, at times a
mentor, he has even been the big bad gunda of the purple and gold team if and when
required. In Kabir Khan lingo: ‘ Har team mein ek hi gunda hota hai aur iss team ka
gunda main hoon’ (In every team there is a boss (bully) and in this team it is me said
the character Kabir Khan in the film). In Shah Rukh Khan’s words: ‘Just like I am responsible for each one of the thousands of people working on my film. I am responsible for the 11 players of Kolkata Knight Riders. I may not be playing in the middle but it’s my team’ (28.5.12 The Telegraph metro Why he never went down “Pratim D Gupta). The star image beyond being a construct to appear more of a rallying point, a mobilizing force, a leader and a perfect icon for India and Indians aspiring to maximize the most of the opportunities that has opened up in a post liberalized regime.

The ace entrepreneur within the discerning star, Shah Rukh led him to chose Kolkata, as for him Goa and Calcutta were the two sports citadel from carrom to cricket. He said Like if have to do films. I will do it in Mumbai like if you want IT, go down south man you know when it comes to Calcutta mihe culture maloom hai, history maloom hai, Bengali zeal bhi maloom hai, par mihe Calcutta sports hi lagta hai. I am very happy that the city has embraced me. The star says that he understand the history and culture and sporting zeal of Calcutta and this is what informed his choice for the city (28.5.12. The Telegraph metro ibid) in a capital and resource enabled business choice of the star turned sports-entepreneur. Interestingly IPL is more than an entrepreneurial venture for Shah Rukh. IPL has acquired personal meaning for the star and he desired to win it personally. ‘Whenever I thought of winning the IPL, I kept telling myself I’ll fight for it. I deserve it, everyone believes in me, I can do it…When you believe in something and you get it, it becomes all the more bigger. Yes, winning the IPL had become a personal thing for me. I used to read, watch on television, what is being written and said about me. Sometimes, it was personal. They said Shah Rukh doesn’t know how to run a team, he is going through a mid-life crisis. There were insinnations that me and Jay (Mehta) were interfering too much, getting into the cricketing side. ..My question is. Bollywood can be allowed in parliament, but not IPL. What kind of logic is that? So yes, personally I did want to win it…This country has given me more than enough to take care of myself for the rest of my life even if I stop today…(31.5.2012. The Times of India: Yes, I did want to win it personally: SRK interview by K Shriniwas Rao: Calcutta Times). The personalized drive to perform well in the IPL against all odds and criticism and the penchant of the star for success articulates the drive of a liberalized nation: its competitive bid – a clear departure from Brahminical values, Hindu growth rate, socialist restraint and other worldliness. Embodying the typifying spirit of urban, middle class India, he replays his desirous cinematic roles that looked for consummation and wish fulfillment. He says:’ I’ll win, I need to. But success has its
beauty that it eradicates all personal and impersonal attacks. All I need to do is succeed at IPL’ (29.5.2012, Calcutta Times, The Times of India).

Such is the passionate involvement of the star with his franchise KKR that he wishes it to the biggest brand of IPL and be a team like Manchester.(Metro 28.5.12, The Telegraph.) Looking at his team’s victory in the finals and its celebration as part of his close involvement, he asserted his responsibility towards his team and justified his ecstatic temper and rejoiceful moments (31.5.12. Anandabazaar Patrika). Successive defeats strengthened his resolve and desire to drive his team to victory, as an ode to sporting city like Calcutta and also to build his team as the best sporting club of India. (28.5.12 The Metro: why he never went down in The Telegraph, Pratim D Gupta). Putting himself at the helm of his team, franchise owner Shah Rukh extended his stardom and once again reformed his ascendency in the world of film to private sports. His professionalized management of the team and his firm resolve to lift the trophy (ibid) espoused the competitive idol of a nation opening up to new opportunities. Notwithstanding the personal feats of team members of KKR at the finals of IPL V, the championship came to be associated with Shah Rukh a celebrated star and achiever in his own rights. Gambhir led the franchise to victory, but for many the Knight’s success is being seen as a huge win for Shah Rukh and Shah Rukh alone (29.5.12 Sport Page, The Telegraph: Coronation & a crazy night by Lokendra Pratap Singh). Such was the star’s physical presence that registered extreme emotional engagement with his team, more than being just a franchise owner, that the victory was seen as equally attributable to Shah Rukh’s genius for strengthening the team’s brand value and mobilizing it. Analogue were drawn from his filmic roles and dialogues with the final match of the tournament and its victory ..to his cinematic heroism in Baazigar My Name Is Khan and so on (28.5.12, Anandabazar Patrika Article Sabyasachi Sarkar).

Shah Rukh himself a brand via IPL was able to ascribe a brand value to his team KKR and the victory: also earned it respect and country wide adulation, pushing up its brand value (29.5.12 The Times of India). The city Kolkata’s name aligned to the team, a successful profit making and finally a champion(in IPL V) franchise came under the pale of brandhood. The triumph of the team, its city wide celebration and the acknowledgement of the team owners and members towards the city and its people brought in the star (SRK), his team (KKR) and the city of Kolkata in a relationship that configures around the dynamics of market, capital, branding, skill, strategy, popular choice, amotion and so on. At the victory celebration, the discerningly popular star in a populist remark tried to embrace the city of Kilkata, declaring the city to be the true
owner of the team. ‘From this day, I am no longer the owner of KKR. I bestow the proprietorship of the team to the city of Kolkata and its people. From this day, Kolkata owns KKR’ (30.5.12 Anandabazar Patrika).

If the state was prompt to appropriate the success of KKR organizing an open victory parade and celebration in a temper that appeared more carnivalesque in spirit, the star was equally alert to respond to unleashed, unbridled, frenzied emotion of the massive gathering. The sheer discursiveness of his popularity was well testified in the celebrations amidst state functionaries and the people. The triumphant mood and the event appeared as a representative and realistic instance of the star’s iconization intersecting with state’s attempt to hegemonize its control of over popular success driven by market and capitalist imperatives and the sheer exhuberance of a gathering identifying the triumph as a biographical extension of the star’s own successful trajectory that reinforces him as an achieving idol for the millions aspiring for success and mobility.

For Shah Rukh in his candid admissions he sees his engagement with IPL as a business venture and an investment in a protentially profitable field likee cricket. The star comments: Out of the nine teams that are in IPL, eight team owners are highly successful businessmen Sahara or Reliance or Vijay Mallya I leave myself out because I’m not in that level (of business man). Lets pick 20 top business in this country and they figure in it. They have a view on where the economy is going. Now, if they show interest and feel there is potential in this (business of cricket), who is anybody else to deny that? I think it’s doing really well. I can speak for Knight Riders. We have been making a decent profit out of running this show. Honestly, I don’t have that kind of cash to throw away. If we’re not getting anything out of it, it will be difficult for us to stay in it. Fifty to 60 percent to what comes out in the media is a result of the tournament’s popularity and high profile people involved in it. I’m a small time businessman and my philosophy is you put in some money and you make some money. The difference between IPL and other foreign leagues could be that in IPL, there are limited budget so there’s a limit on spending...The question you have to ask yourself is does it make business sense To me, it does’ (16.2.2012 The Times of India ‘IPL is doing good business KKR Co Owner Shah Rukh Khan says Franchise Has Been Making A decent Profit: K Shrinivas Rao in Times sport).

As an ace and discerning businessman who sought re-investment of his professional earnings, he is also known to puplarise the game that includes reducing ticket price at KKR’s home ground Eden Gardens as a prerogative of the owner, using KKR matches to act as promotional occasions for Brand Bengal for which he is the state appointed
brand and also bring to the stands his close Bollywood star-associates and colleagues like Hrithik Roshan, Priyanka Chopra, Arjun Rampal and so on.

5.10 THE STATE AND THE STAR: TRYST WITH BENGAL

The tryst of the popular icon Shah Rukh Khan with Bengal, that eventually transformed him to its much avowed and cherished Brand Ambassador began with the 17th Calcutta Film Festival. Having come to power following a long drawn political battle with the Left Front power in government for more than three decades, the newly elected government led by the Trinamul Congress leader Ms Mamata Banerjee was keen to make her proclaimed paribartan(change) pronounced. The arena of the Film Festival proved to be one where one could promptly locate the much vaunted ideal ‘paribartan’. The city always had a link with the star, where he either came to publicise his films or as franchise owner of the Indian Premier League team Kolkata Knight Riders. However, on 10th November he arrived as the honoured state guest to inaugurate Kolkata’s prestigious International Film Festival along with veteran actress Sharmila Tagore, who hails from the state itself. The film festival organized by the newly elected government where the political change was perceptibly registered in the way the function was transformed by departing from intellectualism of an exclusive film literate tutored, cultivated, nourished by an international culture taste and film consciousness, amongst whom most noted was the former chief minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharya, also a principal patron. The newly elected government transported the festival both literally and figuratively from elitist confines to the open mass forum of the Netaji Indoor Stadium which was attended earlier by film conscious people, few ministers, bureaucrats, foreign delegates and guests. Confined to certain elite enclave, the film festival was rendered more open for the commoners what appeared to many as plebianization, seen disdamiifully by orthodox as carnivalesque. The festival was rendered mass-oriented despite running the risk of a decline in the standard of films exhibited. As more of a populist political gesture, the government ensured participation of the local Bengali film industry, committed to mainstream commercial production. Earlier festivals meant mostly parallel films, attended by a small section of educated intellectuals. Besides showing celebrated movies of film maestros, it opened up space for the mainstream as well(26.11.2011, Patrika (Saturday) Anandabazar Patrika, Aatlamir Gahon Surango Theke Janaganer Mukto Manche Abhyuthan (trans). From the dark Intellectual Alleys Ascent to people Free Forum – Gautam Bhattacharya). This departure was best symbolized through the presence of Shah Rukh as the guest and the ChiefMinister’s invitation to be Bengal Brand Ambassador. ‘The city’s signature
cultural event shed its intellectual tag and slipped into a glitzy, colourful garb on Thursday, oozing glamour with stars and basking in the warmth of an appreciation and popularity surge. The 17th edition of the Kolkata Film Festival (KFF) surpassed all its previous editions on the inaugural day itself, thanks to a series of firsts it notched up. Apart from a new venue – Netaji Indoor Stadium – and an extended cultural programme, the festival had Bollywood ‘Badshah Shah Rukh Khan’…The thousands who filled the stands loved it, whistling, clapping and cheering wildly everytime the stars, especially, SRK, took the mike. Later in the evening, SRK was invited by Mamata to take on the role of Bengal’s brand ambassador. The chief minister also used the occasion to make a plea to industrialists to invest in Bengal. It couldn’t have been bigger or more flashy, a far cry from the low key beginnings that have been the trademark of Kolkata film festivals so far. The crowd, too, was rancorous rather than genteel. A deafning roar went up as SRK, dressed nattily in a black suit and wearing a ponytail, walked into the stadium…” (11.11.2011. The Times of India New Look film festival comes closer to Kolkata’s heart: CM invites SRK to Be Bengal Brand Ambassador :Prithvijit Mitra P1).

The earlier dour affair patronized by predecessor Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee into a star studded mass event, epitomized by star power of Shah Rukh (and also sombered by dignity of veteran Sharmita Tagore’s distinction) heralded a change from what was once a closed door event attended by 500 people could now be watched by a 5,000 strong gathering (11.11.11 The Telegraph). The change meant departing from a then of routine government function of an austere event with grim speeches and a ‘film school feel’ to a ‘now of A glamorous cultural extravaganza celebrating popular culture’ (ibid).

The ascendancy of Mamata Banerjee, a grass root woman, mass-leader had an uncanny resemblance to the star Shah Rukh Khan the middle class boy from Delhi a small screen actor an outsider to the film industry allegedly entrenched in nepotic circles. Their trajectory apparently disjunct and disparate was in consonance with the liberalized spirit of its times and its call for openness and expansion of democracy.Hailed as people’s emissary at the film festival of change (28.10.11 Anandabazar Patrika – Badaler Film Utsab-e Janata-r Dyut Shah Rukh reports – Gautam Bhattacharya), his presence was loaded with social, political and economic significance. The newly-elected Chief Minister was keen to present the popular face of democratic change with her personal insistence to invite the star (ibid). From an elitist venue of Nandan to open public form for which a nominal ten rupee fee secured entry, where an enthusiastic mass gathered to see the two popular figures, the star SRK and
the mass leader, Ms. Mamata Banerjee. (11.11.11 Anandobazar Patrika p1 Janatar Abeger Sange Mishlo Ab., Jatyo – Gautam Chakraborty). It was not just a film festival, but an event that served the political mandate to render it more open to mass, make it more amenable to popular taste, and shun earlier protocols (11.11.11, Metro. The Telegraph: Didi’s broken the ice wall with her touch). It broke free of the cabalesque confines of Nandan and basked in the popular spotlight of Netaji Indoor Stadium (11.11.11 The Telegraph, ‘Here a star there a star… at Stadium’: Kushali Nag and Mohna Das) celebrating an event among cheer, loud applause, popular stars and demoeratisation of the festival.

Besides a political statement, the Chief Minister was quick to use it as a business opportunity to rope in the superstar, known for his private enterprises and ventures, and most importantly his ownership of Kolkata based cricket team at the IPL. The star overwhelmed by the interest shown especially by the CM responded to it and also for the fact that earlier the previous government did not show any keenness to attend to the requests for state assistance made by SRK in relation to his team KKR. He appeared to be keen to respond to the new opportunity that has opened up with the newly elected government taking an interest (28.10.11 ibid Anandabazar Patrika: Gautam Bhattacharya). The earlier government two years earlier had even withdraw their invitation to the star to this festival to his dismay and the reason perhaps may be that the creed of films represented by Shah Rukh is not culturally approved by the standards of the earlier government hence stars like Shah Rukh ..are not welcome (26.11.11 Patrika, Anandabazar Patrika, ibid Gautam Bhattacharya). It is during the festival, the chief minister propitiously breached the proposal to Shah Rukh and the star accepted it.

The formalization followed after an affirmation during the festival by the star. The state’s agenda to uphold West Bengal as an investment location, its drive to revive it from a condition of low developmental index, was seen to be best served through the choice of the star a globally known persona youth icon and capable of upholding a favourable image of the state before the world market.

The chief minister securing the informal consent of the star gave an added significance to the people’s festival. In fact, the novelty in the move, was it was the first initiative by the state to select its brand ambassador. While well-known Bollywood actors are known to be brand ambassadors to various states in Bengal via his franchise ownership of IPL cricket team, Kolkata based KKR, enthused the state to approach him. A successful filmic career his iconic status, his takes in Kolkata his minority status (although his fame is not restricted by this) provided the right combination of credentials for influencing the state’s political and economic wisdom to which the star
too responded. The chief minister urged the star to be a facilitator to draw in investment in film industry, promote tourism and so on (11.11.2011 Anandabazar Patrika P 1 Rajyer Brand Dyut Hote Raja Shgh Rukh Anindyo Jana).

This association of the star with Bengal as the brand ambassador was formally announced on 13.2.2012 by the Chief Minister at the Writers Building. What was discussed on 10 November at the Film Festival was made official through formal proposal by the state and the star’s ready acceptance. An official source from the CM’s said ‘A letter had been sent to him after the film festival and tooday the government received Shah Rukh’s letter accepting the offer. It added Shah Rukh has said that he is honoured to accept the offer…the will henceforth be the face of West Bengal in advertisements and programmes of different departments like tourism, sports, cultural affairs and industry’. In view of the stars ace marketing sense brand builders saw the decision of the state as a good marketing strategy (14.2.12 Brand SRK to Boost Brand Mamata The Telegraph Metro). Eminent ad guru Alique Padamsee commented ‘As for SRK being brand ambassador, he is the right choice amongst all other Bollywood celebrities. People have seen him rooting, screaming, jumping in the stands, supporting KKR as any Calcuttans has. In that sense, he is identifiable as the excitement of Bengal’ (5.3.12 The Telegraph t2 Good Life). A state ‘so long associated with bandh and red tapism – hopes to give its image a zing by making Shah Rukh Khan the state’s brand ambassador. Call it Bengal’s answer to Gujarat that has roped in Amitabh Bachchan. There is a lot of expectation from Shah Rukh – hope tht Bengal can cash in on the star’s world wide popularity. As the owner of the Kolkata Knight Riders IPL team, he has a huge fan base in the state. And, it also helps that the Bollywood Badshah has the reputation of being a thorough professional and workaholic…’(14.2.2012 The Times of India, Bengal ropes in Brand Shah Rukh). The choice of the star, with an image of a successful professional an achiever’s image and his own entrepreneurial stakes in Bengal informed the politically prudent decision to appoint him as the state mascot. The state looks forward to deploy his fame, charisma and appeal to promote development and marketing state’s project like tourism, film etc. The star has already shot for a tourism ad film on ‘Beautiful Benga’l brand and unveiled the project of a film city in the state (at Midnapore) (31.3.12 and 16.4.12 The Times of India).

5.11 THE STAR’S ENABLED AGENCY

Hall, as cited points out at the conflict between two paradigm of cultural studies where by the structuralist paradigm without completely under mining individual experience looks at experience to be externally structured in terms of categories, frameworks and
classifications of culture. It ignores the way individuals reflect upon wider cultural films. On the other hand the “culturalist” paradigm emphasizes upon “authentic/lived experience - on reflexive use of culture’s shared resources. (Cauldry, 2000 p51)

The question of agency has been succinctly expressed in Mead’s argument as cited: ‘The fact that all selves are constructed by or in terms of the social process and are individual reflection of it… is not in the least incompatible with or destructive of, the fact that every individual self has its own peculiar individuality, its own unique pattern, because each individual self within that process while it reflects in its own organized structure the behaviour or pattern of the process as a whole, does so from its own particular and unique stand point within the process… the common social origin and constitution of individual selves and their structure does not preclude wide individual differences and variations among them, or contradict the peculiar and more or less distinctive individuality which each of them in fact possesses’. (Mead cited in Cauldry, 2000 ibid. p. 51).

While looking at Shah Rukh’s biography especially in context of a celebrity culture and stardom’s deployment in commercial ventures, one can tend to access it as the star’s participation in activities that is mostly common to most film stars or celebrities. This can tend to undermine his agency and his own biographical experiences his filmographic trajectory and his lived experiences in the industry and his emergence as a star from an otherwise ordinary middle class belongings lacking nepo links or family support unlike many contemporary male/female stars. Each person carries with them an individual history of reflection which cannot be reduced to shared cultural patterns. Partly pure accident and partly structured, this history is the trace of that person’s perceiving, absorbing, interacting retelling reflecting again, and so on, a sequence endured by that person alone and this particular “structure is what is meant by experience” (ibid.).

There are two ways of thinking of wider forces (language, ideology, culture frameworks) as influencing our experience as individuals. While one is that is determining conditions which would determine the specific content of experience, wherein the latter turns out to be truly reducible to those under lying conditions. Alternatively, those wider forces might be merely constitutive or limiting, conditions which would impose some limits on the types of experience we might have but would not determine specifically their content. (ibid.) Shah Rukh’s image as a star in films, in extracinematic commercial ventures, in public domain as a celebrity is constituted by contemporary social, economic and political discourse but this does not preclude his
agency, his conscious participation and his experiences of being constituted by the same via his reflexivity. In filmic narratives his performative agency might be delimited largely by the story, role and dialogue and sees less of his agency than his individual choice to allow his ‘filmic aura’ and charisma in extra filmic ventures. As Cauldry observes that people have to construct their lives and their sense of self from whatever means and in whatever conditions are available: an individual’s cultural experience is to be understood. (ibid). To understand Shah Rukh Khan’s construction as an icon, it is relevant also to go beyond what is available to us as his representation on audio-visual text. It should entail an understanding of his experience and how he performed and delivered as an actor and as a public person.

The question of agency is much deemed in the discursive understanding of subjects that argue ‘The idea here is that we are not sovereign over own sense of identity. Nor do we have much choice about our destinies. Rather we are constructed by discourse and other cultural forces. These provide for our sense of selfhood and the roles we occupy. There is no timeless essence of true selfhood to any of us, but rather the self is a fabrication and fiction’ (Smith, 2001, p. 208). Foucault’s description of subjects as ‘docile bodies’ whereby subjects are the ‘effect’ of discourse demising subjects agency is one of the most significant contribution on the question of agency. And even while conceding to ‘techniques of the self’, in practices of self constitution, recognition and reflection his position continued to uphold that ‘regulatory discourses themselves construct the subject positions of agency. That is, agency is a discursive construction exemplifying the productive character of power.’ (Barker, 2002 p. 89; 90).

An alternative conception of the structure-agency problem has been put forward by Giddens, who has been a steadfast critic of Foncault’s position for what he considers to ‘effacing of agents’ from historical narratives. As per Giddens’ structuration theory that centres on the practices by which agents produce and reproduce social structure through their individual action. Regularized human activities (i.e. structure) is not brought into being by individual actors as such but is continually re-produced by them by the very means whereby they express themselves as actors. In other words, it is in and through their activities that agents reproduce the conditions that make those or render those activities possible. For Giddens, we need to acknowledge the ‘duality of structure’, by which social organization is not only constraining but also ‘enabling’. Giddens further argues that the social order is constructed in and through the every day activities and the very resources that actors draw on and are themselved constituted by, are social in character and also that social structure (or regular pattern of activity) distributes resources and competencies unevenly between actor. That is
regularities or structural properties of social systems constitutes an actor as an actor so that the individuals are shaped by social forces that lie beyond them as particular persons. However, it is those very social structures that also enable subjects to act. (Barker. 2002. p. 90-91).

Despite taking two different positions over the question of agency whereby Giddens stress agency while Foucault on the contrary concentrates on discipline and determination, both writers require us to consider subject as both ‘being determined and as having agency’. (ibid. 91). To substantiate this argument, necessitates a differentiation conceptually between ‘a metaphysical notion of the free self-constituting agent, i.e. those who are held to be free in the sense of ‘not determined’ and a concept of agency as socially produced. While the former concept is not viable and unpalatable as there can be no uncaused human acts, the latter asks us to consider agency as the constituting of acts which make a pragmatic difference. Here agency means the enactment of X instead of Y course of action, but this ability of choice does not imply an undetermined selection of activity. (Barker, 2002. p.91).

This understanding enables us to argue how Shah Rukh’s successful entrepreneurship, his extra-cinematic commercial engagements his cusses in ‘image management’ in the public domain etc. is part of an agency that has been enabled through social position and status he achieved, gained and maintained through his popularity and success as a star-hero of mainstream Hindi cinema. His success and popularity and his stardom have enabled him to attain the required fame that makes him a favoured and preferred choice of multinational brands, domestic consumer products and even for the state as a ‘popular face’ to uphold a ‘populist democracy’. It is his material achievement that empowered him with requisite means and his popular stardom allowed him to exploit his fame and credibility to launch successful ventures like, purchasing privately a cricketing team of the Indian Premier League (IPL), viz Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR), invest in film and related production by opening his privately managed corporation viz Red Chillies Entertainment. As Barker argues ‘… precisely because socially constructed agency involves differentially distributed social resources that give rise to various degrees of the ability to act in specific spaces, so some actors have more scope for action than others do and will consequently pursue different paths of activity’ (ibid. p. 91). Apart from discursively practiced ‘enabled agency depending on differential endowment of resources, Barker observes that often agency is also part of socially determined routine. ‘Rather the basis for our choice has been determined or caused by the very way we are constituted as subjects; by where, when and how we came to be who we are Indeed, a good deal of the actions of modern life are routine in character
and are not thought about in a conscious discursive way but are part of our taken for granted acts of ‘going on’. More often than not we do not make self conscious choices at all but follow a socially determined routinized path’ (ibid. 92). This can lead to speculation that following the ‘Bollywood trend’ to make occasional ‘extra cinematic commercial forays’ in order to be able to exploit and maximize commercial profit from one’s stardom and also be able to afford a ‘star-worthy’ public private life Shah Rukh engaged ‘in socially determined routinized path’ as all contemporaries do or have done. Therefore, it is futile to search for novelty in his action as consciously agentic and purposeful. Besides the commercial imperative of market capitalism to be able to sell more and build better brand by gaining access to greater number of real and potential buyers/consumers, lead companies to strategically deploy popular faces like Shah Rukh Khan as the means for brand building and forging an easy means of recognition and association between the star and the product. Without denying that ‘we clearly have the existential experience of facing and making choices’ and as stars also individual subjects shape those choices and acts’ (ibid. p. 92), as cultural texts Shah Rukh and all celebrities cannot elude determination at the cultural and social level. (ibid. p. 92)

The contingency and determined character of subjectivity does not however imply ‘that we are not original’ and by the same token stars and celebrities lack uniqueness. Notwithstanding, Shah Rukh’s embededness within a discourse the way he manage his public face, the selectivity he exercises in his extra cinematic engagements, the way he maintain his inter personal relations within industry, with the media, the state and so on is unique. As Barker notes ‘While subjectivity is a social and cultural accomplishment, our individuality can be understood in terms of the specific ways in which the resources of the self are arranged. That is, while we are all subject to the ‘impress of history’, the particular form that we take and the specific arrangements of discursive elements are unique to each individual for we have all had singular patterns of biochemistry, family relations, friends, work and access to discursive resources’ (ibid. p. 92-93).

The agency of star might be exercised through the actor’s self perception of the cinematic medium, the roles he enacts and his image as an actor and how he needs to mediate to perform a given character. In an interview given to film maker Ritu Parno Ghosh, Shah Rukh says in response to his views on cinematic medium and acting. The actor to the question on cinematic realism comments : ‘Is there anything real in cinema. Can a whole life be shown in 21/2 hours. Can there be close up in real life? We consider certain things on screen as real. That is reality for film. Cinematic realism is different’. The actors consciousness of the often alleged claim that commercial films are unrealistic resonates in his response to the question on realism.
This view on acting are clearly indicative of the actors involvement and his conscious engagement as an actor. He answers that every actor requires rehearsal, he says: ‘I do not believe in a method where without knowing the script or memorizing I enter for shooting. The scene to be done has to be carefully understood. Where it happened, what happened before it, what will happen after it - without recapitulation along with the director I cannot give my shots. I do not act with directors with whom I have no trust. Like some actors these days I am not fussy about choosing them but I should be also to understand them… Acting cannot be “right or wrong as it can be seen from diverse perspectives. It depends on a person’s intelligence, taste etc…. Right or wrong changes with time who was great actor in 60s is not so great today…” and to a question if there all time greats or not the star replied “no” (Anandolok, 27/12/1997).

The relativized perception of acting and his own requirement to understand the script and be compatible with the director does allow one to read the actor’s agency to be selectively cast at his volition and therefore in more discretionary than being paid star alone.

Looking at the diverse extra cinematic engagement of the star one can conclude upon the star agency and one of the earliest decision by a star to corporate entrepreneurship began with Bachchan. In one of his interview he says that the overwhelming popularity of Hindi cinema abroad and how people recognized him convinced him of this enormous potential of the Indian cinema industry he began his new company ABCL, an entertainment company’ (interview to Veer Sanghvi, Anandolok, 15/5/99) p. 8-14].

The agency of the star is also illustrated in the way SRK negotiates his role and his relationship to the media and industry and also his own skill of managing his profession. All these also contribute to a star’s success. Bachchan the superstar of 70’s sustained his prolonged popularity through a disciplined code of professionalism. It is said in this regard: ‘Commited and sincere with work, eagerness to karu, constant urge to improvise, careful calculativence and discernment in choice of films and co-star, Bachchan gave an amateurish world a new code of professionalism and he was the first one to display such focus in his work and care to sustain his number one position.’ (Anandolok, 15/5/1999. p. 14-15)

Later, Aamir and Shah Rukh have shown their unflinching commitment sincerity and professionalism in managing their career. Actors like Aamir is known to be very meticulous with his acting and does rigorous homework and planning and is also known to be fastidious in limiting his choice of film, he is very discerning and often intervenes in the work of directors (Anandolok 22/3/97,p.12-13)Stardomdoes involve
agency or the voluntaristic choice (both personal and professional) to manipulate in sheer competitive bid to retain one’s position. Already successful stars in Mumbai form cohorts with directors and producers. As for example: ‘Shah Rukh once entered Yash Chopra’s team after being cast in ‘Darr’ that Aamir had earlier rejected as negative, influenced Chopra’s camp that the latter did not enter Chopra’s camp… When Bachchan was at his career high as a megastar and was known to have animosity with Shatrughna Sinha, he did not influence Yash Chopra from casting Shatrughna… In those times when directors were Gods and though a director did rely on his favourite hero for success did not mean that it meant he depended on him for choice of second hero. After 15-20 years everything has changed. Hero is now all and this is how SRK tries to keep Yash Chopra to his sides while Aamir seeks revenge by campaign with director Muhesh Bhatt’ (Anandolok. 22/2/99. p. 26-28).

Shah Rukh’s agency strongly resonates in his decision to endorse, that radically altered all earlier notions that related star campaigning to their falling marketability, is that at the beginnings of his career and at its peak he did not refrain from campaigning for a wide range of products and services. His choice to do ads, bid goodbye to earlier views as redundant, wherein such engagements ceased to be seen as relative decline or failure and more as a popularity and this path breaking formula to remain in circulation even as a busy actor in ads, to maximize his earnings and secure a future as starry careers are short lived added credence to such engagements further. This choice to extend his charisma to people’s everyday life speaks of the actors choice. (Anandolok. 29/4/2000. 29-34). Shah Rukh here can be claimed to be a trend setter who gave a new meaning to star’s extra cinematic engagements in tandem with a full fledged film career while starry engagement in ads was not a novelty, but the decision to do it along with films and trying to secure maximum financial gins from it does add agency to his own commodification.

A veritable sense of agency of the star is derived from his unique style of performance a how his idiosyncracies influences his acting. One of the most significant particularity in Shah Rukh’s style is his “mannerisms” producing a melodramatic excess. To the question on why he recourses to it, SRK says ‘There is no actor without mannerisms,… Ashok Kumar Pran, Dev Anad, Dilip Kumar all have something to typify their style. It is mannerism that immortalizes an actor. Not only here also abroad Charlie Chaplin, Sir Lawrance, Oliver, Richard Burton, Marlon Brando, Alpachino, Robert de Niro—all great Hollywood actor has mannerism. It is true that I have mannerism which might appear funny but in earlier times all great actors like Raj Kapoor, Dev Anand, Shammi Kapoor had mannerism and all of then had great hits to their credit … Elvis Presley was my
inspiration… I admired him and I admit that I have imitated him and made no mistake. I am successful with those mannerism greatly.’ (Anandolok 13/11/1999 p. 22-25). Shah Rukh’s energetic style of acting is of prime importance to him and he says ‘I don’t believe in acting that doesn’t have style…I’m not into becoming the character. I will always be Khan playing the beggar or goonda or villager’. Such style and mannerismsthrough often endeaered him to the audience, it had its problems, as the script had to adjust to his persona instead the other way. This arrogance to assert his own style was there even when he was a modest TV actor (Chopra 2011 p 88). The actor, therefore, had an agency over his style and performance, report April 1995, beyond the constiants of script, narrative discourse and charted roles.

In the film ‘Phir Bhi Dil Hai Hindustani’ produced by Dreams Unlimited co-owned by Shah Rukh. Juli Chawla and Aziz Mirza also the film director, SRK while aware of selling dream as his commercial agenda (of making films) was also keen to exploit his popularity to arouse patriotism among the Indian youth. What is interesting is that the star despite being deployed in endorsements and other extra-cinematic commercial ventures, does not fail to produce a satirical social commentary on ‘Pop’ patriotic nationalism, in times for T.V. journalism consumerism an sponsor-raj. Thus, while himself a model of commercials the conscious actor did not refrain from portraying the inner politics of media hype in his own co-production’. (Anandolok, 19/2/2000, p. 49-50, Anandok, 18/3/2000, p. 17).

A very important area where the star is allowed to become a part of the character enacted is when the role coalesces with the star-biography and gives him a certain agency. The star’s biographer writes : ‘The dilemma for an actor is that he exists only when he is in character, one that is identified by the significant ‘Others’. His identity is a Ghostly presence on celluloid a false existence in an unreal world. The dilemma is that this existence emanates from reality and has its origins in the actors heart and mind. The emotions especially the pain and anguish are real in the mind of the man who is at times an actor. Some of the emotions are real and drawn from life’s experiences… But once in character there is no differentiation; everything is real for the character, and unreal for the actor. The genius is to know the difference and yet obliterate it from he minds of the viewer’ (Sheikh, 2009, p. 282). The agency of the actor,recounts SRK’s biographer is realizable in his ability to render the character real as he draws from his own repertoire of emotive renderings, mannerism etc. involves his experiential understanding in rendering the character real.

Shah Rukh’s involvement with his enacted character roles and his constant dialogue with the director is a well known fact. Sheikh documents how the star and the director
Sanjay Leela negotiated over the script of ‘Devdas’. Sheikh, reviewing Bhansali’s experience of working with SRK notes: “He told me then that ‘give me a month’s time and I would like to make you believe that I am passionate about this, that I have understood your Devdas - the soul, the nuances. A month later, we met up again at his office and he talked - at length. Why he liked this scene, why he didn’t like that scene, what he thought should be done to another. For two hours, he spoke non-stop and it was wonderful to see your script being told back to you, but from an actor’s point of view. I just knew how SRK would approach Devdas. No actor had done this to me. I don’t know whether he does this for every film but for Devdas it was very special because Saigal had done it. Bimal Roy had done, Dilip Kumar had done it and now it was the third generation and he had to be the so-called caretaker of his time. So it was crucial that he got this right. It had to be different from his Rohit/Raj/Rahul. This was a real test. And he knew it.” Bhansali knew that what was needed was to leave Shah Rukh alone. He would see him straight on the movie sets, further the man knew the entire graph, the entire script and he had clearly worked out his script. “I knew I didn’t have to rehearse and I am not the kind of person who likes to rehearse. I feel that the moment has to be lived… so I was very happy that this actor was prepared six months ahead of schedule… It had been hard work for him …’ (Sheikh 2009, p. 285-286). An ace director, Bhansali cedes agency to the star notes Sheikh as the director says how the star tells him for a scene in Devdas: “… ‘I like the idea, I will break the bottles but I will do it my way’ … (ibid 287).

Sheikh observes that while director Bhansali found in SRK a Devdas because of his genuine inheritance of his private pain, longings, his personal tragedies and loneliness and wanted the actor to rejuvenate himself through the role and gain catharsis, directors like Karan Johar in his ‘feel good Rahul/Raj movies’ believes that he too gave the actor a script to play himself, on the strength of his personal access to the star’s private self. ‘… because I know him so well personally. So I write the scene keeping in mind Shah Rukh Khan the human being also the person” (Sheikh, 2009, p. 289).

Such considerations for the actor as directorial choice privileges the actor’s agency to improvise and personalize the roles played. Sheikh’ writes further: ‘For Karan, Shah Rukh cannot be divorced from his films; so much so that he would credit the entire film to Shah Rukh. “My credit is that I know him personally when I write a scene, I know how Shah Rukh will act it. I know there will be an extra line, the aside that he will put in I already know that line, You know what I am talking about his constant improvisations… I know he would put that in and also what the line would be .What the other directors would not give him would be that line. I write him that improvised
line.” (Sheikh. 2009. p. 289-290). The actor by virtue of his personal relations and the compatibility of ideas he shares with the director and his authored roles gives him a latitude. In reminiscent narrative to Mushtaq Sheikh, SRK’s biographer, Karan Johar recounts how it was SRK who inspired him to direct his first film and it was Shah Rukh who chose him to direct a film where he would act and this is how Johar’s first film Kuch Kuch Hota Hai was made (1998).(ibid. p. 295). Karan Johar speaking about the star, he recounts “He never gets anything wrong.. When he is there on your sets, you know he will take care of not just the scene but also the film at that point of time. He will see the larger picture, never just his own. He is so concerned with everything that makes a film work. But you know he will get it right and make it work’ (ibid. p. 296).

While these anecdotal instances recounts occasions of the star agency, the aim remains to posit this enabled agency within the discourse. Identity of the star is contingent upon the roles he plays and the cultural signs and protocol that designate his stardom, his iconization, his representation etc. As identity is constituted through experience, and representation is a significant component of experience. Experience often deludes us to be free agents, and masks the discursive and ideological regime that control us. Identity is therefore a consequence of representation and the effect of discourse. (Nayar 2008 p 25-26). Based against this view it may be argued that the role and performance of the star, his engagements etc. is severally produced and his agency i.e. his capacity and power to determine one’s action and life – is also socially produced by the sheer ability he commands to act for being within a certain position(ibid p 26). The star identity as can be argued is the consequence of representation and effect discourse ‘...Representation is the generation of meaning and constitutes identity. Identity determines the degree of agency one possesses or does not posses. Agency is therefore the consequence of representation’. (ibid).

As discourses and representation determine an individuals identity, agency and actions, it may be argued that it is the construction of SRK’s filmic image within a largely global consumerist vocabulary that allowed this identity to be commercially utilized and subsequently determined his agency, actions and choices in his various filmic and extra filmic engagements. Besides his ascendency from a middle class biography largely fulfilled the middle class aspiration and myth of success propagated to attract the consuming middle class within a liberalizing regime. A close examination reveals how state’s policy of liberal reforms market forces aligned with a propagandist global media are the large powers that control the discourses and ‘have powers of determining identity and agency...we need to analyse structures of power that influence
images, representation and meaning because these structures finally determine individual lives and actions’. (ibid p 27).

Besides it needs to be kept in mind, that like all film stars SRK is positioned within a media ecology of the Hindi film: they are :s the star and her/his personality, the tools (camera, setting lights, etc., the workers (technicians), the language (of the film, of instructions), the community (film industry, unions, star relationships), the audience (reception, fans), the marketing (publicity), the iconography (the posters, the appearances of the stars), the VJ who anchors programmes about the film on TV), the parodies re-mix versions of its must, the court cases, if any, the role of the state (censorship), the reviews (Nayar 2008 p 44)

The agency of the star caught in webs of media ecology needs to negotiate with the entire universe of the industry and the assemblage and cannot be discretely operant. However, once a hero becomes a star he comes to be a highly valued commodity of film, in a male-dominated industry reliant mostly on hero centric narrative (Ganti 2004). Top heroes like Shah Rukh and Amir are known to enjoy considerable clout within the industry. SRK’s contemporary and close competitor . Amir is known to be closely involved in monitory both post and pre-production details and is also know to give detailed attention almost as a producer would (Anandalok 8.7.2001). Film journalist Gahlot notes ‘Not only does Amir have an instinct for scripts a certain ruthlessness in matters of picking films…a keen sense of how best to promote his movies and which markets are to be targeted, but he also handles each film with complete focus from pre-production to post-production and publicity…(Galilot 2012 p 228). Riding on consecutive success of films SRK’s close competitor Salman Khan also have been reported to have raised fees and appointing his directors for his next films(30/7/2011, Saturday Times, The Times Of India). The aim is here to highlight not only the agency of SRK but most successful male stars of a male dominated industry, as an enabled position that is insinuated within a (male) star dominated discourse of the Mumbai film industry.

Film commentators have also identified agency of top-stars like Shah Rukh in his conscious extra-cinematic engagements and his well managed image that promoted him as ‘Brand SRK’ (Joshi 2012 p 232). Shah Rukh’s agency is well known in cases where he consciously close to make a film on super hero (13.10.11. The Telegraph p11 t2) and also driven by his conviction to produce films that are technically at par with Hollywood (23.10.11, The Telegraph) and what his own kids can enjoy (ibid). Following the star’s dream Ra One was made which, in SRK’s words ‘…is the biggest film ever made in India’. Not just in terms of budget which has been kept under wraps
and is believed to be in the range of Rs. 125 – 150 crore but also the kind of visual effects the film boasts of (13.9.11, The Telegraph t2 p8). Such is the agency of the star that eminent directors suspend their shooting schedules because of Khan’s impromptu holiday plan post “Ra One release (24.8.2011 Times of India).

The creative input of the star and his understanding of the medium is an agentic component that is well perceived in his successful endorsements. Ad film maker Daveen Mungal says: ‘…SRK himself is the biggest input. He had loved the script and did give us a few points to make it better…Once SRK comes in front of the camera …the frame changes! It becomes so much better. His presence adds so much …He knows what the brand wants and he knows what the director is creating’ (13.5.2011 t2 p3 The Telegraph).

Another instance of star agency is professional rivalry and competitive bid of the stars to market themselves better amongst their fans/audience. Stars functioning as narcissistic idols are perfects exemplars of ambition and egoistic display of prowess especially in the competitive Bollywood industry where male stars compete fiercely to retain their fiefdom, fandom and influence over the box office and the larger market. The stars -driven initiatives accounts for their agency in such competitive bids to remain in public gaze and adulation. A report writes: ‘ A veteran film maker close to Shah Rukh Khan was said to have watched his overkill with growing concern. When SRK went into an over-driven to promote Ra One, to the extent that some of his own fans and audience began to switch channels exhausted with the sheer exposure of the star… as his quest was to ensure that Ra One got a better opening than Bodyguard(a film starring his close competitor Salman Khan) since the first day collections indicate the star power more than the drawing power of the film itself. The battle was not to make the better film but to show my daddy’s bigger than yours. It is this immature race for numbers that’s really doing all these big guys in Everybody is talking numbers today..An important point is that Ra One is only a big gamble and it won’t make any material difference to Shah Rukh’s stardom. Unfortunately, it’s the ego that kicks in, the desperation that he must huff, puff and make it to the finishing line with as much flourish as Salman did with Bodyguard ‘ (Bharati S Pradhan 30.10.2011 The Sunday Telegraph p 15).

The star has shown extreme care to respond to overtures and popular demands by fans and for several consecutive year he is seen to climb up the boundary walls of his mansion ‘ Mannat’ on his birthdays to wave at the yearing crowd (3.11.11 The Telegraph). This is a rare and unique practise that sets him apart from the league of contemporary heroes. Having reached a certain position of reasonably high status in the
industry, the star has often asserted his choice for producing films of his choice like Ra One. And contrary to the perception that stars are constructs of the industry one sees how his accomplished position enables him to even chart a futuristic course for the industry. In an interview to The Times of India 26.03.2011, the star says:’ I am in a position to make choices. I have made my place and am trying to serve that best I can…Ra One is my personal attempt to please audience who have loved me for 20 years. I will not feel bad if my film flops. I won’t bring my family onto the streets with this film. But I will certainly feel as if I failed to serve my audience…Most of the money in this film is mine …I have been working really hard making appearances and shows because I needed the money to complete the film. If the film does not make money at the price it was sold, I will work for free for distributors and make sure they do not lose money. I am a businessman. I don’t want to borrow or be obligated to anyone in my life. Ra One is a dream. Very few people get to live their dream. I have lived mine and there is no commercial tag attached to a dream. Ra One is a salute to India’s technical expertise. People across the globe contributed to its making – but India was the nerve centre. The film was visualized in our VFX (video special effects) studio. Ra One had 3700 VFS shots – that’s more than Avatar’s score. People should know that India offers international class VFX at an affordable price tag. Today a Steven Speilberg is looking for investment from us. The table have turned …what we need to invest in is knowhow – the knowledge of film making, marketing, organizational structure and management of cinema… I am a free willed self employed actor who does a film when it appeals to my heart and mind…(26/3/11.The Times of india). Elsewhere the star expresses his desire to make a super hero films for his children, his departed parents and his woman audience – a film for the Indian audience that can boast of technological expertise and complete with Hollywood and world cinema. To produce the film the star invested capital to bring the best talents of the industry for its making. He nurtured the vision of producing commercial film at par with international standards(16.9.2011 t2 Teh Telegraph Cover Story p 13) Consolidated financially and well entrenched actor in the industry like SRK can afford to fulfil his vision for producing world class films with a competitive edge over Hollywood amongst our audience. As the largest film producing nation he says we cannot lose out to Hollywood and hence his venture towards making of Ra One (16.9.11 t2 The Telegraph).

The capital enabled star ventured into entrepreneur ship, an area where on several occasions he reiterated his autonomy, discretion and pride over the control he exercised. One such area is that of IPL, wherein as a franchise owner he considers himself to be
the ‘mascot’ of his team, KKR. (3.6.12, The Telegraph Sport p 19). His decisive moves to revamp the team composition of KKR even at the cost of eliminating local boy and former Indian captain Sourav Ganguly amidst several debate and criticism is an instance of his powerful volition. He said ‘New boys, a team within control, fresh energy…and no ghosts from the past to describe the new look outfit of his team, where he was free enough to command and did not have to negotiate with an equally popular cricket star like Sourav Ganguly (28.5.12 The Telegraph p 18). Expressing his command over KKR, he says: I’m the mentor of this team…The owner of this team…The hero of this team, I’m the God of this team ‘(16.5.12 The Telegraph, Sport p 14

SRK: Grow up on the Sourav

While market forces choses a popular saleable face like SRK, the star himself holds his conviction on endorsing as being: ‘…it is business for me too. If there is a company that is able to put crores of rupees on a single face, then it must be a company that many people believe in, because they wouldn’t have done so well otherwise. I consider it a great honour. I am nobody to question these brands…with endorsements. I believe that it is your ad, it is your product. You tell me what to do and I’ll do it….’ (Okay 10/2 017 jpg) While big manufacturers leverage his popularity, to reach out a large number of target audience, the star himself is in an empowered position to bargain and negotiate in his business like assignments.

According to Giddens, as cited, each social actor ‘not only “has” but lives a biography reflexively organized in terms of …information about possible ways of life’. (O Byrne 2001 p 142) Shah Rukh in his various commercial ventures applies his biography reflexively in response to the various opportunities, discerningly negotiating from his position of enabled agency.

Digitization shifts human agency and structure to a register of informational bits. And serves to recast it. Pluralizing the subjects and objects of communication in the proliferating network of information render any unilinear view of the world and history impossible and it is becoming difficult, or even impossible, to continue abiding by the conceptual categories imposed by orthodox discourses of political realism Simulations of cyberspace in the global and local flow go far beyond the old realist divisions of space and time, new globalized hyperspaces with no sense of place;cyberspace in particular forces human beings to reconceptualize their spatial situation in as much as they experience their positionalizations in cyberspace only as simulations in some virtual life form and as the third nature perhaps becomes populated by new kinds of digital being. By displacing human action into another domain, new sites of identity, community and sovereignty for human subjects emerge. one form of digital being
emerges and its when actual beings begin experiencing the cybernetic agency becoming a computer user, working on and off time with complex computational systems. The fusion of (con) fusion of neo (man)/machine in computer applications creates many new positionalizations of subjectivity as hardware based, calculator, reader, viewer, sriter, composer..communicator, inventor, observer. Without networked desktop video to visualize the actual operator’s physical body, this form of digital being now uses existing interface to let anyone assume their own virtual personae, hyperembodiments and agencies in various telematic contexts. The telecommuter are themselves and others as cybersubjects. These positionalizations of individual agency are more than minor variants of conventional tool usage, they provide new social roles to reinvent and/or evade a dramaturgy collective cultural activity as telepresences or as cyberagents and such digital beings represent themselves and deal with others through a textual interface. Graphics scanned photos, voice and desktop video can change this sociology of digital being, but most interactions still occur within bursts of electronic writes. These mediations of one’s identity as a digital being, in turn, delimit how such telepresence of hyperembodiment is experienced. This kind of digital being in cyberspatial political economy veers back and forth between states of existence defined either by serious work roles or fantastic play roles (Luke 1999 29-39).

Shah Rukh’s agency and subjectivity, like many other celebrities is a further addition to his agency of expression in the virtual cyberspace through his comments on social networking sites, Tweeter, etc. The star, commanding thousands of followers of his updates on these sits as an active digital being in simulated cyberspace that goes beyond statist confines and conventional notions of space and time transports him to a domain where his positionality is relatively fluid and he is empowered within a new site of agency to recreate his subjectivity and sovereignty over his views and image which are otherwise seen as media’s discursive constructions. As a digital, cybersubject falling within a new discourse of ‘Cyber Ontology’ enables his agency further within a hyperreal virtual space. Shah Rukh writes observes comments or his interactive sites reflective of his personal views on issues ranging from sports, cinema to politics about his own engagements, snippets of his private life/self etc. Opening up a new front for interacting in a virtual domain, which is nevertheless both popular, public and peopled. Foucault’s perception of insidious and permeating effects of discourse upon subjects wherein power in capillary form seeps into the very grain to reach right into their bodies, permeates their gestures, their posture, what they say how they learn to live and work with other people (cited in Ashcroft 2001 p 110) problematizes construction of agentic subject. However, applying Ashcroft’s resolution to this, we can see that the
discursive mobility of the star between on screen career and off screen life allow him agency or space for discursive mobility within arena of competing discourses. His filmic casting, business ventures, public relations, commercial engagements, off screen life, private life, allow him to straddle several domains. As discourses are fragile and subjects shift often between competing discourse allow for agency. Fractured discourses fail in their hold over the individual subjects (ibid p 111). So even if capitalist global market, state’s liberalizing policies, film biography, popular culture are the discourses that intersect, negotiate and coalesce to produce the star – ‘it is that cracks may appear in discourse through which agency may operate, confirms the provisional hold actually exerted by discursive formations’. (ibid p 111).

5.12 CONCLUSION
Shah Rukh Khan’s stardom, his filmic image and persona while privileging an appropriation of the same by market driven capitalist forces also offers insights beyond it, viz the subjection of the star image to discourse of class, status, gender, popular culture, state, public domain, media reports etc. This chapter methodologically remains constrained for not being able to furnish primary data from the primary text, viz the star, SRK himself or the discursive popular appropriation of the star’s image by the fan (sub)culture. Exploring the star’s authentic biographical accounts, newspaper reports, media images, some popular film magazine reports the chapter seeks to contour his iconization within the larger public domain beyond cinematic frame. The discussion on the question of star’s ‘enabled agency’ looks into his position within the larger discourse of market-driven capitalist culture that invests him with the requisite ability and choice to further support his ‘branding’ through his capital-enhanced position. The star is thus caught within the capitalist vortex that constructs him to further, consciously to re-produce this imaging further.

Such is the charisma of the star and pervasive popularity that the state, in particular the state of West Bengal, along with the market appropriates his image to its own political agenda. The star’s success bring to life the myth of middle class ascendency to new opportunities of good living, and his signification within a large intertextual media universe and his entrepreneurial ventures, his reified image exploiting his marketability as a commodity, his iconization beyond films thus provide an interesting intersection of several discourses that inscribes and appropriates the star image, the major playes being the market, the media and not the least the state.
END NOTES

1 The popular film magazine reviewing the history of Hindi film stars engagement with advertisements observes: ‘Not many years ago, till 60s and 70s the models who featured in advertisements in various newspapers and magazine, despite having an attractive presence, were unknown to common people. The model who endorsed the product, was only known to the company who produced the commodity product and the agency of the advertisement who crafted and designed the publicity. The model was familiar to people only by virtue of promoting a brand… For very long this remained the normal relationship between the models of ads and common people. And here, only Lux soaps ads has been an exception since from the very beginning Hindustan Lever company have advertised it as beauty soap of film stars and people strongly responded to it. It was Lux which was the first brand to produce large close-ups of faces of charming and beautiful film stars for their ad. campaigns. While cricketers were seen in ads for long, for instance Farooq Engineer, India’s leading batsman and wicket keeper was seen in Bryl cream ads. Silver screen personalities remained in their mystified aura. To sustain public interest and fascination alive, this distance was their main tact… In the next two to three decades as far as products endorsement is concerned celebrities become highly visible… Some of the legends from the 80’s entered as advertising models and conversely those who were primarily models for product campaigning chose acting in films subsequently as their profession. This relation of exchange between the two fields forged an alliance between the ad world and films. As Mithun Sang praise for Japanese electronic goods, Sridevi wore Vimal Saree, Hema Malini did not hesitate to endorse mosquito repellent mats or washing detergent powers. Dharmendra came riding Rajdoot bikes, Sharmila Tagore endorsed in favour of a certain brand of Basmati rice and her publicity campaign along with here husband M.A.K. Pataudi, former cricket capture of India for “Don Fab”. Jeetendra featured to project the virtue of his energetic youthfulness by endorsing the secret formula of rejuvenating ’30 + capsules’ while Shatrughna Sinha and Sanjeev Kumar endorsed drinks, Digjam Suiting engaged models like Shekhar Kapoor, Aditya Pancholi, Milind Gunaji … Juhi Chawla turned to a superhit film heroine from ads. of Boro Calendula face cream. Jackie Shroff the macho hero was known through his Charminar ads. In fact, we would not have known the relevance of successful advertising models like sangita Bijlani, Arti Gupta and Sonu Walia if they did not enter the silver screen. Poonam Dhillon in ‘Dabur Amla’ hair oil, Vinod Khanna in Cinthol soap, Baba Zarda and Polar Fans, Moonmoon Sen in a hair oil ad. Dimple Kapadia in Godrej’s Crowning Glory soap are documents of memorable star presence in ads that helped to increase product sale significantly.’ (ANANDOLOK,29/4/2000,p.29-34)

2. In its expressive and conative functions, the sign delineates a group including both addresser and addressee. The phatic function of this is to mark out something like a community within which the exchange is taking place, even if this community is a temporary one. The phatic is what binds addresser and addressee together in the act of exchange of signs. Conversely, though in marking out a group like this, the phatic also excludes those who are not part of it. The phatic function links addressers and addressees in all sorts of degrees of social inclusion and exclusion. Some kind of phatic functioning is inevitable in any sign activity and exchange. If an exchange of signs implies a common code writing which the exchange can take place, then that exchange will on broadest scale phatically include those with access to the code and exclude those without it. A phatic community bind a group together and give it an immediately recognizable identity. Phatic function can be enormously complex and subtle ways of discerning insiders, and the degree of their belonging.