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CHAPTER – 5

FINDINGS, DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter is designed to present the main findings and conclusions evolved from the research and provide suggestions to the marketers on ways to make covert advertising more effective in Bollywood movies. These findings are the result of the detailed analysis of the data collected from the sample respondents and it is briefly discussed in the following section.

5.1 MAIN FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Some of the major findings of the study are as follows

- The study reveals that majority of the respondents believe that product / brand placement in movies is an alternative to traditional advertising.
- It is observed in the study that majority of the viewers watch Bollywood movies once in two week.
- It is revealed in the study that Comedy movie is strongly liked among the other types of Bollywood movies.
- The study shows that majority of the respondents could recall the brands/ products featured in the movie.
- As per the study, respondents recalled the brands/ products under Beverage category fully than other type of brand/ product category.
- Majority of the respondents had the foreknowledge of the brand/ product they observed and recalled in the Bollywood movies.
- Active product placement (i.e., actor using the brand) is recalled more than the passive product placement by the respondents.
- In the case of familiarity about the practice of Product Placement in Bollywood movies, it was found that majority of the respondents opined that they are familiar
- As per the study, it was found a large majority of the respondents declares that product / brand placement in movies influences their ‘buying’ decision.
• The study revealed that product placement in Bollywood movies affect the attitude of majority of the respondents towards the brand/product featured in the bollywood movies.
• In the case of ‘decision to buy’ majority of the respondents implemented their buying decision after watching the brands/products in Bollywood movies.
• The factor which majorly influenced the respondents towards their buying decision relating to the brands/products featured in the Bollywood movies were the popularity of the actor.
• The study indicated that brands/products under Beverages category were purchased majorly than any other brand/product category.

5.2 VERIFICATION OF THE HYPOTHESES

1. First Hypothesis

The first hypothesis states as follows

“Covert advertising is more effective than other forms of traditional advertising”.

Hence \( H_0 \) and \( H_1 \) are as follows:

\[ H_0 \ : \ Covert \ advertising \ is \ no \ more \ effective \ than \ other \ forms \ of \ traditional \ advertising \]

\[ H_1 \ : \ Covert \ advertising \ is \ more \ effective \ than \ other \ forms \ of \ traditional \ advertising \]

According to Table 4.8 of chapter four, 397 out of 500 respondents accounting for 79.4 percent believe that product/brand placement in movies is a superior alternative to traditional advertising.

In other words, covert advertising is more effective than other forms of traditional advertising. Hence \( H_0 \) is rejected.
2. Second Hypothesis

The second hypothesis states as follows

“Viewers favour selected type of movies”.

Hence $H_0$ and $H_1$ are as follows:

$H_0$ : There is no difference in the opinion regarding the type of movies.
$H_1$ : There is difference in the opinion regarding the type of movies.

According to Table 4.11 of chapter four, 468 out of 500 respondents accounting for 93.2 percent favoured comedy movies over other type of movies.

In other words, viewers favour selected type of movies. Hence $H_0$ is rejected.

3. Third Hypothesis

The third hypothesis states as follows

“Viewers express better recall for certain brand categories and active product placement”.

Third hypothesis is divided into two components, $H_{3a}$ and $H_{3b}$.

$H_0$ and $H_1$ for $H_{3a}$ are as follows

$H_0$ : Brand categories are independent of brand recall.
$H_1$ : Brand categories are not independent of brand recall.

According to Table-4.13 of chapter four, 442 out of 500 respondents accounting for 88.4 percent have recalled the brands watched in the Bollywood movie and Table 4.14 of Chapter 4, 442 out of 442 respondents accounting for 100 percent recall brands under Beverage category over the brands under other brand/ product category.

In other words, viewers recall brands with certain brand/ product category. Hence $H_0$ is rejected.
**H₀ and H₁ for H3b are as follows**

H₀ : Active product placement is independent of brand recall.

H₁ : Active product placement is not independent of brand recall.

According to Table 4.16 of chapter four, 279 out of 442 respondents accounting for 63.12 percent of respondents declare that of the product/brand used by their favourite actor in the Bollywood movies influences their brand recall rate.

In other words, active product placement has an impact on viewers brand recall rate. Hence H₀ is rejected.

4. Fourth Hypothesis

The fourth hypothesis states as follows

“**Positive attitude towards the product placement would result in greater affinity for the brand and an intention to purchase**”.

Hence H₀ and H₁ are as follows

H₀ : Positive attitude towards product placement would not result in greater affinity for the brand and an intention to purchase.

H₁ : Positive attitude towards product placement would result in greater affinity for the brand and an intention to purchase.

According to Table 4.19 of chapter four, 424 out of 500 respondents accounting for 84.8 percent are positively affected by the product placement in the Bollywood movies. And from Table 4.22 of chapter four, 297 out of 363 respondents accounting for 81.8 percent have being influenced to implement the buying decision highly motivated by the popularity of the actor using the brand in the Bollywood movies watched and have purchased the brands/products featured in the Bollywood movies.

In other words, positive attitude towards product placement would result in greater affinity for the brand and an intention to purchase. Hence H₀ is rejected.
5.3 GENERAL DISCUSSION

The marketers understand the impact of covert advertising to their brand or product, believing that the high popularity of a certain film or series will surely rake in more patrons for the products being covertly endorsed. It uses undercover tactics turning ordinary entertainment into an extended advert. It raises brand or name image making it more recognizable and memorable to the target audience. Covert advertising is a style of advertising that viewers will struggle to turn away from.

The traditional advertising media like television, radio, newspaper and magazines have its own disadvantages like low selectivity, short message life, high absolute and production cost, clutter, fleeting message, audio only, low attention getting, long lead time for ad placement, lack of flexibility, visuals only, poor reproduction quality and selected reader exposure. So, Today, marketing experts believe that a company has to make use of new communication channels to survive and stay ahead of the competition. This is why most companies are now leaning towards product placement or branded entertainment as new way to communicate with consumers.

Movies have become one of the effective medium to reach out consumers. Product placement in movies has become a trend all over the world and India is also impacted by it. Movies as a medium give an excellent opportunity to marketers to place their products in movies and potential to connect emotionally with consumers.

Creating a brand image is based on strong and memorable brand identity through artistic appeals and execution styles. Artistic execution style is the use of the imagination or original ideas, especially in the production of an artistic work. It is a novel and varied stimulant that may be useful in solving problems, communicating ideas and values with others, and entertaining ourselves and others. It is also the qualitative impetus behind any given act of creation, and it is generally perceived to be associated with intelligence and cognition.
A particular advertising appeal can be executed in a variety of ways and a particular means of execution can be applied to a variety of advertising appeals. Since the goal of advertising is to present information to potential customers. This information, it is hoped, will result in customer adopting more favorable attitudes toward the advertised product or service. These attitudes, in return should result in a greater probability of the customer purchasing the advertised product or using the service than if customers had not been exposed to the advertisement.

The effectiveness of communication is determined by factors like the credibility, attractiveness and power of the source(sender). Celebrity branding is a global phenomenon and it assumes paramount importance in developing countries like India where celebrities are given the status of demy Gods by the masses. The charisma of the celebrities almost always entices people and their words are worshipped by lot of people. Their influence also goes on the political front, where they are invited for political endorsement. The business firms, thus, resort to celebrity endorsement to perk up brand recall and product sales. Celebrities are widely used as communication source in advertising and celebrity source may enhance attitude change of customers for a variety of reasons like, the credibility, attractiveness and power of the celebrity.

Celebrities are people who enjoy specific public recognition by a large number of certain groups of people. They have some characteristic attributes like attractiveness, extraordinary lifestyle or special skills that are not commonly observed. Thus, it can be said that within a society, celebrities generally differ from the common people and enjoy a high degree of public awareness.

For ex.: There is no doubt that Kareena Kapoor is one of the most beautiful current day actresses in Bollywood. And as a brand ambassador, her beauty as well as her charm plays a big role in capturing the audience’s heart. In the movie Heroine she portrays the role of an actress possessing an independent
and beautiful personality. The movie showcases Kareena Kapoor using Apple iPhone and at the same time shows the elite lifestyle of Apple. And it’s a brand that is quite frankly apparent to everyone, regardless if they are an Apple product user or not. The fact of the matter is that Apple is simply not selling a product, it’s selling a lifestyle. Apple is setting itself up to target the upper middle class segment in Urban cities.

Genre in film is the study of films in order to facilitate the categorization of films for spectators. Indeed, the identification of a movie as part of a genre enables potential viewers to decide whether it is likely to appeal to them” or not. Genre can depend on various factors such as the type movie, story line, who the director is or what are the audience expectations. By using genre theory, movie viewers create a short cut in how to choose which films they intend to watch.

The growing presence of product placements in movies may help audiences defining element of their lifestyle, thanks to branded products serving as significant objects in the elaboration of scenarios that determine the genre. Brands serve as "psychocultural" cues to the audience's construction of meanings. Since the movie genre depends on a carefully drawn sociocultural scenario reflecting the prominence of today’s consumption patterns such as clothing, makeup, home furnishings, food, and beverages, the characters interacting with those products tend to increase this psychographic dimension. In addition, the higher is movie watching frequency, the higher audiences will be accustomed to the inherent consumption patterns routinely depicted in movie scenario (Gupta end Gould, 1997).

Lifestyle is the way a person lives and the constellation of products and services used to support this existence. A lifestyle brand is a brand that attempts to embody the values and aspirations of a group or culture for purposes of marketing.
Each individual has an identity based on their choices, experiences, and background (e.g. ethnicity, social class, subculture, nationality, etc.). A lifestyle brand aims to sell product by convincing potential customers that this identity will be reinforced or supplemented if they publicly associate themselves with the brand. The image is used to create a seamless identity that consumers can simply purchase without having to think deeply about each individual purchasing decision. Instead, products will be purchased because they create and promote an image the company hopes will appeal to consumers.

When a consumer makes a purchase of certain brands, the behavior and choices define the expression of a certain taste – of a personal identity. It makes the statement, “This is who and what I am.” It is a combination of a number of emotional factors including social status, self-worth assessment and emotional aspirations. A number of the most important emotional benefits of a product declare the expression, “It suits my lifestyle”.

Not every brand can be a lifestyle brand regardless if it strives to portray it. A company can define itself as a lifestyle brand when its products promote a certain lifestyle. However, lifestyle branding is more than just promoting a way of life; it is a product or service that provides consumers with an emotional attachment to a particular lifestyle. In return, companies can reap financial benefits by developing and sustaining an emotional and long-term bond with the consumer – thus a high profit margin is one of the reasons to become a lifestyle brand.

Previously, brands have been an aspect of life. Something we interact with and use but most important, something we did not necessarily need for life. It seems that there is a shift occurring where brands are becoming a part of our life, representing a style of life. Some brands have all along had this aspect of “lifestyle brand” But there are some outlier brands that are taking this type of brand strategy serious.
Apple would definitely be the simplest and easiest one to dissect. And it’s a brand that is quite frankly apparent to everyone, regardless if they are an Apple product user or not. The fact of the matter is that Apple is simply not selling a product, it’s selling a lifestyle.

Failing to remember is a common occurrence in consumer behavior. Such memory failures in the context of product purchase and consumption translates into lost sales and profits. Consumers’ ability to remember also plays a role in advertising effectiveness. Advertising’s long-term effects may depend on consumer memory. Memory consists of cognitive learning and retrieval. Cognitive learning is getting information into memory. It occurs when information processed in short-term memory is stored in long-term memory. Retrieval is getting it back out.

Retrieval depends on whether the information requires recall and recognition. Recognition requires identifying something as familiar because we’ve seen it before with a brand. Recall is more cognitively demanding than recognition. If consumers don’t remember the brand, then the other things they do remember will not be linked to the brand in memory. The more attention given to a stimulus, the greater the chances of being remembered.

There are a number of ways companies can enhance consumers’ attention to their messages. A novel way of enhancing attention is through product placement in movies. Retrieval cues i.e., actors using the products in the movies also help to link the favorable feelings generated by them to the product. Entertaining movies put Consumers in a good Mood. And mood influences retrieval. Positive moods increase the chances of remembering favorable information. Since movie comprises variety of emotions like humor, music, fantasy, romance and action, all these emotion play a vital role to influence the positive mood of the consumers.
Lehu and Bressoud (2007) found that only 34 percent of their respondents recalled the day after at least one brand placed in the movie they just watched. It cannot be ignored that plenty of academic researchers have demonstrated that attitude does generally influence branded product recognition, and to a certain extent, have an impact on customers’ purchase intentions in so far as the product or the brand familiarity is established (Babin and Thompson-Carder, 1996; Karrh, Firth and Callison, 2001; Gibson and Maurer, 2000; Gould, Gupta and Grabner-Krauter, 2000; Gupta and Lord, 1998; Baker and Crawford, 1995).

Since attitude is a learned predisposition to behave in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a given object. Consumer attitudes play a key role in deciding the fortunes of the firms. The attitudes of consumers reflect in their purchases, changes in the attitude occur in the long run with serious efforts by the manufacturers to change them. Consumer decision making is an embodiment of consumers attitudes and behavior towards products, media, advertisements and choice of outlet. Marketers should analyze and understand the consumer’s attitudes, modifying attitudes and turning positive attitudes towards their products and services. For a marketer, understanding the consumers behavior is very important. The behavior of the consumer at the market place will depend on what he ‘thinks as a reality’ or on his perception and knowledge about the world which in turn may be influenced by past experience or learning, expectations, beliefs, values and personality. Thus, marketers must examine the importance of the perception and its integrations with the related concepts. This information will help him to device marketing strategies and programmes, to help consumers to perceive their (firm’s) products or services positively.

Celebrity endorsement has reasonable impact on customers as per their attitude and purchase intention. Physical attractiveness, credibility and congruence of celebrity with reference to the endorsed advertisement all have impact on the customer’s perception about the advertised product.
A celebrity is used to impart credibility and aspirational values to a brand, but the celebrity needs to match the product. A good brand campaign idea and an intrinsic link between the celebrity and the message are must for a successful campaign. Celebrities are no doubt good at generating attention, recall, positive attitudes and creating favourable perception towards advertising provided that they are supporting a good idea and there is an explicit fit between them and the brand. On the other hand, they are rendered useless when it comes to the actual efficiency of the core product, creating positive attitudes to brands, purchase intentions and actual sales.

5.4 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

The present research mainly contributes on the effectiveness of covert advertising in Bollywood movies and also it evaluates some of the key factors like recognition and recall of brand and attitude of movie viewers towards product placement. The respondents were selected from selected multiplexes from Bangalore and have been evaluated through the above mentioned dimensions, and which have been organized to formulate an integrated approach suitable to the marketers.

Basically, the present research is empirical in nature. It has been carried out by relying on both primary and secondary data, and has highlighted the theoretical and conceptual framework of covert advertising. The conceptual framework and development are significant in the sense that they can provide with definitions, concepts and development of management of covert advertising in both historical and contemporary contexts. In addition to its archival role, the review of literature has provided the background of the study, and has also been used for the purpose of establishing measurement scales and empirical research mechanisms.

Chapter 1 has presented an introduction and background on covert advertising. So it gives a clear idea on the concepts, technique and management which are required for efficiency of covert advertising. Also we identified some of the major significances which gives a positive impact in order to
increase the effectiveness and efficient covert advertising. Scope mainly gives the path in order to achieve the suitable result and it mainly in-lined with the mentioned significances. We made our path clear through research methodology and also we covered and mentioned clearly the different systems and subsystems through proper structure and framework. The primary source of information in this research has been drawn from questionnaires developed for the above-stated purpose. The questionnaire was designed to ensure that the precise data required would be collected from the respondents to achieve the objectives of the research. The items in this questionnaire were essentially identical with the approach developed from the literature review on the dimensions of on the effectiveness of covert advertising in Bollywood movies and also it evaluates some of the key factors like recognition and recall of brand and attitude of movie viewers towards product placement. The items have content validity, as the concepts to be measured are clearly specified in each question, avoiding slang, abbreviations and any terms with potentially ambiguous meanings.

It also contained operational definitions which were essential for constructing the instrument structure and measurement scales. In addition to its archival function, it has also been extensively used to highlight the conceptual model.

Chapter 2 has offered a review of literature which provided the background to the study.

Chapter 3 has presented mainly on the related concepts, management and categorization of covert advertising This chapter helps us to understand how different types of product placement performs and interlinked with respect to our mentioned dimensions.

Chapter 4 mainly describes the data analysis and it mainly gives us the strong foundation for the statements stated at chapter 5. On the obtained result at the mentioned dimensions, we tested and verified the entire hypotheses.
through proper channel and process. We mainly assessed the effectiveness of covert advertising in Bollywood movies; also we assessed the recognition and recall of brand featured in movies. Also we studied the factors influencing the buying decision.

Chapter 5 gives a complete crisp of results with appropriate discussions, we identified some of the key findings with respect to our study, and also we tested and verified the hypotheses with suitable explanation along with which we have explained the complete view on this study through general discussion. This research elaborated the contribution of this research by explaining the complete result from the data analysis. Also we identified some of the limitations which will help for others for future research. Finally in order to wind up through proper conclusion and suggestion, we concluded by explaining some of the important areas based on the obtained result and have given many of the suggestions in which marketers should look for effective and efficient means of product placement strategies.

5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Some of the limitations of the study are as follows

1. The present study is limited only to the selected multiplexes from Bangalore.
2. The present study involved only 500 sample size. Higher sample size would yield better directionality of results.
3. All the responses have been measured through questionnaires only, which reflects personal opinions and observations which are highly subjective, no attempt has been made to cross validate the results.

5.6 CONCLUSION

Advertising occupies a major place in Integrated Marketing Communication strategy of marketers. It has evolved in sync with the changing media environment. Marketers are constantly in search of innovative technique which has grabbed the attention in recent years is ‘Covert Advertising’. The research shows that product placements in films are a viable alternative to
traditional forms of advertising. The reason for this is that product placement (especially prominent product placements) is readily recognized by viewers. Product placements therefore offer numerous benefits to the marketer in terms of reach and diminishing cost per viewer. Product placement is an immense field of research within which much is yet to be discovered.

Active placements (product used by the actor) score considerably higher than passive or subtle placements. Actively mentioned brands had higher recall and recognition rates than brands which remained in the background. If there is in-film branding in a movie, the 1,000 audience sitting in the theatre are going to look at it unlike a TV channel where they can browse through different channels. Hence it’s here that the brands catch and can hold on to consumers' undivided attention. The power of Celebrities (actors), many with iconic and idol status, give greater credibility to brands and reinforce or establish positive associations.

The study indicates that brand placement in Bollywood films are effective. The high recall, recognition and positive attitude scores suggest that brand managers are seriously looking at product placements in movies as a new vehicle for reaching to consumers.

However, several issues need to be kept in mind. The brand managers’ needs to guard against the clutter in the scenes- other competing products of product category should not be incorporated. The brand managers however, should pretest the placement to determine the exact level at which viewer irritation sets in. As success of brand placement is dependent on the success of the movie and consequently, its reach, it is not possible to evaluate placements from a sales generation perspective. More importantly, as Indian audiences become fragmented into class specific segments, marketers are faced with the more difficult task of communicating their brand messages. Effective and well thought of product placement appears to be some solution.
5.7 SUGGESTIONS

The following are the Researcher’s suggestions in the light of the findings and conclusions arrived at:

- The fact that a majority of the respondents are males can be exploited by the movie viewer and the marketer. In a traditional society like India, men have been more outgoing than women and hence it is only natural that more of men watch films than women. Additionally, these are days when men spend hours before a mirror preening themselves. So preening or primping or grooming is no longer an all-female preserve. Having noticed this trend, marketers have introduced several products that men can use to primp themselves. Even fairness creams are marketed for men these days. Marketers can get imaginative and exploit any situation by coming out with a new suite of products consistent with the new situation although such products were never marketed before. On their part, movie producers can popularise these products by subtly suggesting through the characters of their movies that successful men primp themselves with the help of these products.

- Respondents in the 26-35 age group are economically productive and inclined to loosen their purse strings. They want to look smart, they want to acquire all material possessions and they do not mind taking a little bit of risk. At this stage of their life they are not fastidious. They are receptive to new ideas, new products and new concepts. All these attributes work in favour of the marketer. The Researcher strongly Suggests that the marketer as well as the movie producer go the extra mile to target respondents in this age group. These respondents are the potential geese that can lay the golden egg for the marketer and the movie producer as well.

- Graduate respondents are better informed and given the kind of crowd they have rubbed shoulders with during their college days, can be relied upon by the marketer to try out new products and services. Since they are likely to socialise with educated people most of the time, they may be counted upon to popularise good products / services through word-of-mouth. No
marketing tool works as cheaply and as effectively as word-of-mouth. Hence the Researcher Suggests that movie producers and marketers go out of the way to convince this section of the respondents about the merits of their products / services. It will be a worthy investment.

- If the family size is six or more, it should warm the cockles of the marketer’s heart since it translates into a larger consumption basket. Such a family is bound to consist of the young and the old and men and women, with different requirements. Also, the family’s budget has to be proportionately high. Hence the marketer can market a slew of products and services to such families. In value terms and volume terms, the marketer is bound to benefit and hence the Researcher suggests that the marketer and the movie producer place products / services that cater to the demands of such families through movies.

- Professionals translate into regular consumers for the marketer. Such respondents buy consistently and over a period of time, their purchase levels go up. Additionally, they tend to buy an enlarged basket of products / services owing to the arrival of new members in the family. Professionals may be bulk and consistent buyers. A marketer needs bulk buyers and consistent buyers. Hence the Researcher Suggests that the marketer place products that are popular with professional through movies. Such products could be four wheelers, vacational spots, professional shoes, ties, ready-to-eat items, etc, which are popular with professionals.

- Respondents in the INR 50,001 – INR 1,00,000 range of monthly income are amongst those who spend heavily on consumption. Often they resort to conspicuous consumption. No marketer can afford to ignore this category of consumers. In fact it is this category of consumers that is more likely to succumb to products placed through movies given its penchant to keep up with the Joneses. If the character being portrayed in the movie is from such a background, the marketer as well as the movie producer should use the occasion to market such consumer durables and non-durables as premium after-shave lotion, portable fridge and iPod to this category of consumers.
Lifestyle products are here to stay. Lifestyle products sell in rural markets too. Rising incomes, growing urbanisation, changing attitudes, changing tastes and changing moral standards of the people are amongst the factors that patronise lifestyle products. Lifestyle changes ring in new lifestyle products. As the saying goes, change is the only constant in life and this adage has proved itself over and over again. Hence the interest of the respondents in lifestyle products is not a fits-and-starts phenomenon. It is here to stay. It is progressing steadily. Hence the Researcher suggests that marketers of lifestyle products do not miss the opportunity of placing their products through movies.

For covert advertising, movie is the best media. Movies can drive the message home to all categories of movie viewers swiftly and effectively, literally in the same language, whatever their literacy levels. It is cost-effective for the movie producer and the marketer as well. From the marketer’s perspective, the message reaches a cross-section of prospective consumers across the country and at times across the globe (as in the case of Bollywood movies, which are released abroad too) at minimal cost. From the perspective of the movie producer, it helps to reduce the outlay on the movie since the marketer pays the movie producer for placing the product through the film. Hence this fact should be exploited by the movie producer as well as the marketer without fail.

When a majority of the respondents state that products / brands had been featured in the movies they watched, it implies that more and more marketers are using covert advertising and by extension, movies, to place their products / services. This only proves that covert advertising is increasingly being resorted to by marketers. It is for the marketers and the movie producers concerned to ensure that they do not go for the overkill while undertaking covert advertising and botch it up.

The respondents are able to recall the items like Apple Iphone, Royal Enfield, Nike and Macdonald had been featured in the films they watched. The implication is that lifestyle products, consumer non-durables and state-of-the-art gadgets register with the movie viewers.
A majority of the respondents state that the products / brands were presented actively in the movies they had watched. But that need not imply that such active presentation of the products / brands has met with the approval of the respondents. In fact, such active presentation, in particular at frequent intervals, may prove counterproductive.

The respondents indeed are a discerning lot because they are clear that products / brands were presented actively in the movies they had watched. This also implies that they can discern if the product / brand is presented too actively for their comfort, through the movies. Movie producers and the marketers should take note of the subtext. The subtext implies that they cannot take the movie viewers for granted. Movie viewers will appreciate the product / brand placed through the movie subject to this caveat. Hence the Researcher strongly Suggests that the movie producer and the marketer do not go for the overkill.

Since a majority of the respondents who had watched movies featuring products / brands actively are able to recall the details associated with the said products / brands, product brand placement should focus on those features of the product / brand that will positively influence the ‘buy’ decision of the movie viewer. Focusing or even superficially treating the other aspects of the product / brand is superfluous and will only lead to avoidable loss of valuable time, energy and money for the movie producer and the marketer.

A majority of the respondents have foreknowledge of the products / brands placed through films. In other words, they are better prepared to identify the merits and demerits of the product by the time they get to watch the movie. It is in this backdrop that the movie producer as well as the marketer should design and implement the product placement strategy. Ignoring this fact will leave the movie viewer unimpressed with product / brand presentation.
It is good tidings for the movie producer and the marketer that a majority of the respondents declare that product / brand placement in movies influences their ‘buy’ decision. So the two categories of stake-holders can rest assured that product / brand placement through movies will influence the ‘buy’ decision of the movie viewers. They need entertain no doubt on that count. All that they have to focus on is how to place the product / brand so it can positively influence the ‘buy’ decision of the movie viewer. So if the product / brand placement exercise flops, it does not mean that the movie viewers are not receptive to product / brand placement through movies; all it means is that the product / brand placement on the part of the stake-holders has been defective. The Researcher therefore Suggests that the two stake-holders devise a defect-free product / brand placement strategy and implement it properly.

All the respondents try out beverages and food items. Fashion apparels, electronic goods, and automobiles follow suit. Beverages and food items are patronised by people across all age groups and that probably explains their high level of popularity. The items that the respondents try out post covert advertising are illustrative and by no means exhaustive. It is for the movie producer and the marketer to get imaginative and try to place other products of interest to the movie viewers through the movies. Such products / brands which can be placed through movies are limited only by imagination and hence the two stake-holders should always be preoccupied with identifying the possible new products / brands that can be placed through movies. Innovation and ingenuity can help in marketing any product successfully, particularly when supplemented by an effective and ubiquitous media like the movie.

A majority of the respondents claim that the way the product / brand is presented in the movie affects their attitude towards the product / brand. This statement has far-reaching implications for the marketer and the movie producer, in the order. One important implication is that even if the product / brand in question is inadequate on one parameter or the other, the movie
producer and the marketer can more than redeem themselves by presenting /
placing the product / brand the right way. The Researcher Suggests that the
movie producer and the marketer should exploit this elbow room as and
when necessary.

- Lifestyle implications of the placed product / brand lead most movie
  viewers to buy the product / brand. Particularly if the product / brand
  concerned is used by the character played by a popular actor in the movie,
  one can safely bet that most movie viewers would try the product / brand.
  The reason is simple: movie viewers desire to ape their favourite actor
  whatever it may cost them in monetary terms. Actors and sportspersons,
  amongst others, are viewed by movie viewers as successful individuals and
  therefore movie viewers believe that aping them would lead them to success
  too. Even the copy appeals to the movie viewers particularly when it is
crisp , even if it is a bit of hot air. Yet some products convey a certain
image – for example, the manufacturer of a certain brand of motorcycle
claims that its products are ‘for men’ and ‘not for the boys’ implying
thereby that motorcycles manufactured by its competitors are suitable for
boys and not ‘men’. This being the case, movie viewers and marketers
should decide on the placement strategy after duly factoring in these
‘influencers’. The Researcher Suggests that the two stake-holders feature a
popular actor in the movie, draft an appealing copy and ensure that the
product / brand communicates a positive image of itself.

- If a majority of the respondents believe that product / brand placement in
  movies is an alternative to traditional advertising, it is not surprising. In the
space-age world, everyone seeks to achieve the maximum in the minimum
possible time. Hence multi-tasking is the name of the game. If movie-
watching comes with product promotion, the movie viewer welcomes it for
the same reason. No doubt the promotion will be biased but given that a
discerning movie viewer is capable of separating the grain from the chaff,
this fact should hardly prove a deterrent. Traditional advertising demands
more of the prospective consumer’s time, is costlier and at times,
cumbersome. Yet in a huge geography like India, traditional advertising
does have its advantages but such advantages are to be reaped only in the
remote parts of the country where the population is thinly spread and power infrastructure, road infrastructure and the like are still at a primitive stage of development. A good rule of thumb therefore is to go by the dictum that product / brand placement through movies is an alternative to traditional advertising and the Researcher Suggests that movie producers and marketers adhere to this dictum.

The movie viewers’ justification of the statement that product / brand placement in movies is an alternative to traditional advertising is no doubt telling. The respondents are right when they cite that placement through movies is audience-friendly. Movies do not need a well-informed audience to drive home the merits of the placed products. Nor do they need copious time for the exercise. Given that movies are screened at various points of time across the country, the placed product delivers much more that what the marketer hoped for. Movies are released across all metros and tier-I cities. Tier-II and tier-III cities follow and they in turn are followed by towns and villages across the huge geography that is India. This implies that at any point of time within a year of its release, the movie is watched at least in some part of the country or the other and by extension, the embedded product is watched too. TV channels and air-carriers also feature the movies in the subsequent phase. Given this longevity, placement through movies is cost-effective for the marketer. Thanks to technology, these days, respondents can zap across channels if they come across an instance of traditional advertising. But when the product is woven into the film’s storyline, the movie viewer has to willy-nilly watch the placed product to relish the movie. Thus the product is assured of a captive base of ‘prospective consumers’. There are so many other benefits that accrue to the marketer as well as the movie producer as already explained. The respondents have more than amply justified their statement that product / brand placement through movies is an alternative to traditional advertising. In the circumstances, the Researcher Suggests that marketers view product / brand placement in movies as an effective alternative to traditional advertising and get down to the task of exploiting the opportunities it provides.
The movie viewers’ justification of the statement that product / brand placement in movies is not an alternative to traditional advertising is equally telling. The respondents are right when they argue that it is easy to advertise ‘ethically charged’ products such as cigarettes and alcohol to a huge audience and portray them as appealing and desirable. In the process, prohibited products are promoted through movies and the law remains a mute witness to it. Hence consumer protection is jeopardised. The marketer and the movie viewers may not agree on the definition of “fair advertising”. What is “fair advertising” for the marketer and movie producer seldom qualifies as “fair advertising” from the movie viewers perspective. At times, the advertising exercise may mislead the movie viewers and qualify as “false advertising”, thereby attracting the punitive provisions of the relevant law. Misuse and abuse of covert advertising may lead the movie viewers to distrust the exercise and by extension lead them to reject the placed product / brand even whey they are good. While these arguments are true, it cannot be denied that in a market economy, both the sides have a right to exploit the opportunities presented by the market as long as the exploitation is fair. The point is that the regulator has to have enough teeth to deal with the violators but in the case of covert advertising through films, even if the regulator has teeth, it is practically difficult to implement the punitive measures effectively. It is the respective industry body which has to shoulder this responsibility and supplement the efforts of the regulator. In the case of movie producers, the association of film producers and in the case of marketers, the relevant advertising association and in the case of movie viewers, the relevant consumer forums should take the initiative and shoulder the responsibility, whereby sincere covert advertising exercises are tolerated, harmful covert advertising exercises are nipped in the bud and movie viewers are encouraged to judge the covert advertising exercises in an objective manner.
5.8 FURTHER RESEARCH

None objects to placement of products in movies through the covert advertising route as long as it helps the marketer to ramp up its sales volumes, the movie producer to reduce albeit to a modest extent the outlay on the movie under production and the movie viewer to take informed ‘buy’ decisions concerning the product / brand placed through the movie. After all, India has switched over to market economy and any productive economic activity is welcome in view of its beneficial fallout. However, product / brand placement through movies whether covert or overt has a flip side to it – the marketer and the movie producer may individually or jointly use the film to promote ethically charged products like cigarette and alcohol. It is not possible to promote such products in the usual manner because the laws of the land come in the way.

However, by promoting the product / brand in films through the covert advertising route, the marketer and the movie producer manage to stay on the right side of the law even as they violate the law with impunity. In other words, they violate the spirit of the law though not the letter of the law. The regulatory regime has to be fine-tuned to plug this loophole.

In the circumstances, the Researcher suggests that a study be taken up to ascertain how this loophole can be plugged. Ethically charged products are injurious to the health of the movie viewer and to the movie viewer’s favourite actor as well. The actor should not promote it even through films. Promotion of vices by movie producers and marketers is the last thing the country can afford.