Role of Emotional Branding and Doppelganger Brand Image in Indian Lower House Elections of 2014

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Abstract—Politics and Marketing go hand in hand. A party's or a candidate's use of environmental analysis and opinion research to promote and publicize an awareness about the party's organizational motto and aims for the betterment and satisfaction of groups of electors in exchange for their votes is the role of Marketing in politics. Emotional branding is chiefly regarded as a key to marketing success in politics. However, when using emotional branding as a tool to reach out and connect to the masses, little attention is given to the risks posed by this strategy. This article attempts to illuminate how emotional-branding strategies, in an attempt to appeal to the masses are conducive to the emergence of a negative brand image of that party or candidate, technically called as "Doppelgänger" brand Image. A case study of Lok Sabha Election polls of 2014 held in India is considered to highlight how doppelgänger brand image can affect the voting response of the public. The authors discuss how the principle of emotional branding used by the losing party paradoxically encouraged the formation and propagation of doppelgänger brand imagery which back-fired them. The historic loss of Indian National Congress against Bhartiya Janata Party is closely analyzed from the emotional branding and brand outlook perspective. The author concludes with a discussion of how Indian National Congress can progressively use the insights gained by analyzing a doppelgänger brand image.

Keywords—Indian National Congress, Bhartiya Janata Party, Doppelgänger Brand Image, Emotional Branding, Marketing Campaigns.

I. INTRODUCTION

Change plays a pivotal role in the engine of growth for any dynamic organization. Defining Organization, it encompasses any platform or a group or a medium working on collaborative efforts to achieve some goal. The marketing task, then lies in generating and developing fresh "out of the box" ideas that exploit change and adapting to them. Simply put, marketing is a process by which companies select customers, analyze their needs, and then develop product innovations, advertising, pricing, and distribution strategies on the basis of that information (mass marketing in politics).

The same principles that operate in the commercial marketplace hold true in the political marketplace: successful companies have a market orientation and are constantly engaged in creating value for their customers. In other words, marketers must anticipate their customers' needs, and then constantly develop innovative products and services to keep their customers satisfied. Politicians have a similar orientation and are constantly trying to create value for their constituents by improving the quality of life, and creating the most benefit at the smallest cost where voters are the potential customers (Kotler and Kotler 1981, 1999). In politics, the application of marketing involves specific analysis revolving around the need of voters and citizens as the potential customers. The product becomes a multifaceted combination of the politician himself, his brand image, the platform he advocates and the motive he advertises. Although price is not directly applicable to politics, there still is a value proposition the politician is offering to citizens and voters in return for their support. This can come in the form of votes, money, volunteer efforts, or even positive responses to a potential voting citizen about the politician.

Dealing with politics, a successful marketing campaign goes beyond the simple identification of the needs of voting citizens, but also includes the ability to forecast what those needs will be in the future. This means that a successful marketing campaign in politics is molded from need assessment study. This need assessment study is nothing but an extensive study which relies on information from the marketplace to help guide research and development and modify the strategy wherever needed. A typical marketing campaign and its stages has been explained shortly. There are many different types of polls that candidates rely upon, including benchmark surveys (usually conducted after a candidate has decided to seek office to provide a baseline of information); trial heat surveys (used to group candidates together in

hypothetical match-ups early in the campaign); tracking polls (conducted on a daily basis near election day to monitor any late shifts in support); cross-sectional and (conducted by the major polling firms over time to provide a picture of where the electorate stands at different points during a campaign); and exit polls (carried out immediately after the voter casts his or her ballot)(Asher 1998). Once proper analysis is performed, the candidates then get a clearer picture of market segmentation and the groups that should be targeted. This paves the way to candidate positioning and Image management. Positioning in its simple terms is process that begins with the candidate stars assessing both his own and his opponents' strengths and weaknesses. Positioning is the vehicle which allows the candidate to convey his image to voters in the best light possible. The image of the candidate is crafted through the media marketing by emphasizing certain personality traits of the candidate. Candidate positioning often overlaps with Image Management.

II. IMAGE MANAGEMENT

2.1 The Political Scenario of India before polls

According to a Wikipedia, the acute problems faced by India since 2000 as reported by a leading Indian newspaper are Poverty, Corruption, Sanitation and Debt Bondage. (According to Rural poverty Portal), the population of India was 1.267 Billion in 2014 out of which nearly, 0.857 billion population resides in Rural parts of India. Nearly 220 Million rural population lives below the poverty line as per the portal. Speaking of Corruption, Transparency International ranks India as 38 Corruption Perception Index on the scale of 100. The Corruption Perceptions Index ranks countries and territories based on how corrupt their public sector is perceived to be. A country or territory's score indicates the perceived level of public sector corruption on a scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean). A country or territory's rank indicates its position relative to the other countries and territories in the index. India ranks 85 amongst 175 countries clearly revealing that corruption is widespread in India. Two major political parties Indian National Congress (INC) and Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) had adopted different manifesto for the upcoming elections. While Congress concentrated on "Right to Health", "Right to homestead", "Right to social security" and "Right to pension" the focus of Bhartiya Janata Party was curbing rising prices, corruption and economy, and security, infrastructure such as roads, electricity and water. Bhartiya Janata Party promised a vibrant and participatory democracy, inclusive and sustainable development, quality life, and productive youth, and globally competitive economy, open and transparent government, pro-active and pro-people good governance in its manifesto. A keen observation can point out the first strike of difference between each party's mottos. BJP was successful in perfectly positioning itself in coherence with the existing problems which India faced by clearly emphasizing and stressing on the motto of Development.

About 13 online Blogs discussing political news were traced over a period of three months before and two months after the general assembly elections took place. An extensive survey was taken among 80 citizens (voters) of India belonging to varying age groups and cultural sections in an attempt to replicate the Indian Society as a whole. The entire survey consisted of two brief stages: Stage one involved scrutinizing the survey members about what led them to vote a particular party and what did the Brand of the Party mean to them as whole. This survey was Launched Immediately post-Election Results. The pivotal aim of this survey was to analyze what aspect of marketing campaign influenced a citizen to Vote for A particular candidate. The Second Stage of survey was conducted one year later after BJP won the elections and formulated a government which functioned seamlessly for about a year. The primary aim of this survey was to observe if there was a change in brand Image and outlook of those survey members and Study it with their opinions given one year ago.

III. EMOTIONAL BRANDING

3.1 Introduction

Franklin D. Roosevelt, in his marketing campaign for presidential elections extensively used the then sophisticated marketing technology to manufacture an image for himself. Roosevelt used a technology during his time which allowed him to go direct to the American electorate after he entered office in 1932. Relying on radio, Roosevelt would have fireside chats with the American people. He even touched the emotional angle of the citizens by posing an imagery that he could walk, where he actually was crippled. He did this by leaning on the muscular arm of his son, and used a cane in the other hand to give the illusion that he was walking, when in fact he really wasn't. There are only four seconds of recorded film of Roosevelt shown walking in this manner. In an effort to convince the American people that he was not crippled, Roosevelt had the braces on his legs painted black, and always wore black pants that went down to his shoes so the braces could not be seen (Newman 1994). This is typically the best example of emotional branding which was conveyed by Roosevelt to the citizens about his "never give up" attitude.

3.2 The crux of emotional branding

So, the term emotional branding was coined in late 1990s where it emerged as an alternative approach to

conventional benefit-driven approach to branding. Emotional branding fell different as compared to conventional benefit-driven approach to branding mainly because it did not believe in creating a clear and distinct image of a product in the mind of a consumer. (Gobe 2001; Zaltman 2003) The reason behind this was, benefit-driven approach, which did have a clear and distinctive image in the mind of the consumer could easily be imitated or copied, particularly is the product has some key features associated. Secondly, it is very difficult to attract and draw a customer's attention using a straight forward benefit approach about a product in the modern market which is heavily cluttered with a plethora of brands, each fighting to claim distinctiveness in their product (Thompson, Rindfleisch 2006).

From an emotional-branding standpoint, brand strategists should focus on telling stories that inspire and captivate consumers. These stories must demonstrate a genuine understanding of consumers' lifestyles, dreams, and goals and compellingly represent how the brand can enrich their lives (Roberts 2004). As Gobe (2002, p. xxi) writes, "consumers today not only want to be romanced by the brand they choose to bring into their lives, they absolutely want to establish a multifaceted holistic relationship with that and this means they expect the brand to play a positive, proactive role in their lives." This clearly shows, that consumers expect a pampering from the brands. Thus, the strategic objective of emotional branding is to forge strong and meaningful affective bonds with consumers and, in so doing, become part of their life stories, memories, and an important link in their social networks (Atkin 2004). Over the past few years, many well-known brands have adopted emotional-branding strategies, including Tide, Lexus, Apple, Nike, IBM, Cheerios, McDonald's, and Starbucks (Atkin 2004; Gobe 2001; Roberts 2004).

3.3 Role of Emotional branding in Politics

Take the concept of emotional branding to Indian Politics, the citizens of India will have an emotional attachment to the candidate, who is involved in mending the acute problems faced by voters in their day-to-day lives making their routine simpler. The tenets of emotional branding are perfectly aligned with the postmodern view that brand meanings are not controlled by managers but rather are co-created through ongoing interactions among their users (Cova and Cova 2002; Fournier 1998; Muniz and O'Guinn 2001). Emotional Branding involves customers who play a vital and important role in shaping the image of the brand. The consumers are made to feel as Enthusiastic partners and brand ambassadors where they are involved in intimate dialogues other brand users, play a role of Community building protecting and safeguarding any attempt to disgrace the image of that brand. In politics, by interacting with such "enthusiastic partners", a lot of insights can be obtained and can gain valuable insights into marketing design improvements and campaign innovations, new publicity development opportunities, and resonant meanings that can be leveraged in advertising campaigns.

A survey of a total of 80 Indian interviewees was taken which highlighted some key points indicating that BJP implemented a strong resonance of emotional branding. Participants were informed that the interviews pertained to their experiences and perceptions of political parties and their candidates and were ensured that their identity would remain confidential. Each interview began with a set of "grand tour" questions about participants' personal backgrounds, interest, and life goals and then focused on their experiences and perceptions of brand Image of Prime minister candidate.

Fig.1: Campaign manifesto of Indian National Congress and Bhartiya Janata Party

In Fig. 1, both the parties have attempted to address the youth, however, the approach of Bhartiya Janata Party to emotionally relate with the youth was by sympathizing with the major hurdle faced by youth of unemployment. This facilitated the youth to connect easily with Modi's Agenda of development. Amongst 80 people who were interviewed, nearly 63 indicated that they were able to relate to the agenda and manifesto of "Development" and the clarity encompassed by it. Only 17 were influenced by the agenda presented by Congress manifesto of Empowering Common Man. The survey also highlighted that the candidate Narendra Modi (BJP Prime Ministerial Candidate) had an emotional branding surrounding him. From an emotional-branding standpoint, brand strategists focus on telling stories that inspire and captivate consumers. These stories must demonstrate a genuine understanding of consumers' lifestyles, dreams, and goals and compellingly represent how the brand can enrich their lives. During campaigns, the success stories of how under the leadership of the then Chief minister Modi, had Gujarat State developed. "With just 5% of India's population and 6% of its land mass, it accounts for 7.6% of its GDP, almost a tenth of its workforce, and 22% of its exports", claimed a popular newspaper Economist. It further said that "The state has moved from a deficit in electricity generation, in 2002, to a surplus, despite the

energy demands of a booming economy. Its 18,000 rural villages are connected to the grid." Survey indicates that voters were tremendously influenced by how Modi reacted to the Tata Motors scenario that earned him awe and respect from citizens not only of Gujarat but from the entire country. "In 2008 Tata Motors switched the site for the plant to make the Nano, a small car, from West Bengal to Sanand in Gujarat after Ratan Tata, owner of the conglomerate parent, received an SMS message from Mr. Modi offering him a factory-ready plot for the firm and its suppliers. Bogged down in messy land disputes at its initial choice of site, Tata Motors readily made the switch. Others have since followed. Ford is opening a plant in Sanand later this year." Says a person involved in survey when asked about her opinion about Modi's vision of Development. The Economist newspaper quoted that Apollo, a big tire manufacturer, opted in 1990 to build a plant in Gujarat in part because clearances were less painful than elsewhere. These incidences helped in creating an emotional congruence in people's mind about Modi's Manifesto of Development.

The survey also highlighted that, the image of Narendra Modi's struggle from being a *chaiwala*(tea seller) in his early childhood to Chief Minister of Gujarat to finally being Prime Ministerial candidate created more emotional similarity among the middle class struggling population which constitutes about 43 percent of Indian population. On the contrary the brand image of Indian Congress Vice-President Rahul Gandhi was quite the opposite. Coming from an elite family with a background in politics, the common man cannot emotionally relate to him, says a Asha Singh (Name changed on request). A study was made on the speeches of Narendra Modi and compared with those of Rahul Gandhi which enlightened the strong oratory skills based on crisp facts by Modi when addressed to the general Public. This further added fuel to emotional engagement toward the "Modi brand" image. Nearly 73 of 80 Interviewees were inspired and complimented Modi's oratory skills and his approach in public relations, and public speaking.

IV. DOPPELGÄNGER BRAND IMAGE AND TROLLING

4.1 Introduction

Social media marketing is marketing using online communities, social networks, blog marketing and more. It's the latest "buzz" in marketing. India is probably among the first proponents of social media marketing. The explosion of social media phenomenon is as mind boggling as that and the pace at which it is growing is maddening. Trust and goodwill are the basis of social networking, and by marketing in the realm of social media these fundamental notions need to be adhered. It is

probably the only marketing platform that encourages fool proof communication and accountability among sellers as well as consumers. Global companies have recognized social media Marketing as a potential marketing platform, utilized them with innovations to power their advertising campaign with social media marketing.

Any website which allows user to share their content, opinions, views and encourages interaction and community building can be classified as a social media. Some popular social media sites are: Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Digg, MySpace, StumbleUpon, Delicious, Scribd, Flickr etc. According to 2010 Social Media Marketing Industry Report 2010, a majority of marketers (56%) are using social media for 6 hours or more each week, and nearly one in three invest 11 or more hours weekly. Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and blogs were the top four social media tools used by marketers, in order. A significant 81% of marketers plan on increasing their use of blogs. A majority of the marketers are employing social media for marketing purposes and small businesses were slightly more likely to use social media. 76% of marketers are spending at least 4 hours each week on their social media marketing efforts. The statistics shown below in Table 1 indicates the rate at which internet usage is booming in India.

4.2 Negative Impact of Doppelgänger Images and trolling

The negative impact of Emotional Branding which often causes an eruption of brand image is the "doppelgänger brand image"—that is, a collection of denouncing images and stories about a brand that are circulated in social media by a loosely organized network of consumers, anti-brand activists, bloggers, and opinion leaders in the news and entertainment media with an intention to ridicule the emotional aura surrounding the brand. The Doppelgänger brand image competes with the culture resonant meaning that the brand management team of the product is trying to convey through its marketing activities. Ridiculing the opposition is quite a routine in politics (Thompson, Rindfleisch 2006). Due to emergence of social media this denouncing act has amplified due to the easy access of Internet from smart-phones and laptops. Online trolling is the practice of behaving in a deceptive, destructive, or disruptive manner in a social setting on the Internet with an apparent instrumental purpose to discredit and mock someone. Such Anti-Party jammers routinely spread meanings through cyberspace, using attention-grabbing blends of narrative, satirical images, and animation. One animated web parody belittles the pretentiousness of the counter talk that unfolds.

A similar case was experienced during the elections where Congress candidate Rahul Gandhi was targeted with a doppelganger brand image of "Novice Prince" which

when used in a derogatory sense, it could mean "naive" or "dumb" and it also refers to duffer as quoted by FirstPost Newspaper. There were certain incidences of blunders made by Rahul Gandhi during the marketing Campaigns which led to the uproar of such disparaging trolls online. The Survey highlights that almost 82% of the interviewees felt that Congress Prime Minister Candidate was surrounded with an Image of being naïve and new which stopped them voting Congress. A closer insight among these 82% people reveal that All of them were from an age group of 18-35 years, which clearly indicates that the "internet generation" were deeply influenced by Social Media trolling. Nearly 56 people of the interviewees claimed that they had witnessed the troll images on their social networking platforms which led them to refrain from voting Indian

Table.1: India Internet Users

Year	Internet Users**	Penetration (% of Pop)	Total Population	Non-Users (Internet less)	1Y User Change	1Y User Change	Population Change
2016*	**462,124,989**	34.8 %	1,326,801,576	864,676,587	30.5 %	108,010,242	1.2 %
2015*	**354,114,747**	27 %	1,311,050,527	956,935,780	51.9 %	120,962,270	1.22 %
2014	**233,152,478**	18 %	1,295,291,543	1,062,139,065	20.7 %	39,948,148	1.23 %
2013	**193,204,330**	15.1 %	1,279,498,874	1,086,294,544	21.5 %	34,243,984	1.26 %
2012	**158,960,346**	12.6 %	1,263,589,639	1,104,629,293	26.5 %	33,342,533	1.29 %
2011	**125,617,813**	10.1 %	1,247,446,011	1,121,828,198	36.1 %	33,293,976	1.34 %
2010	**92,323,838**	7.5 %	1,230,984,504	1,138,660,666	48.5 %	30,157,710	1.38 %
2009	**62,166,128**	5.1 %	1,214,182,182	1,152,016,054	18.6 %	9,734,457	1.43 %
2008	**52,431,671**	4.4 %	1,197,070,109	1,144,638,438	12.5 %	5,834,088	1.47 %

Note:

* Estimate for July 1, 2016

** Internet User = individual who can access the Internet at home, via any device type and connection.

***Source**: Internet Live Stats (www.InternetLiveStats.com)*

Elaboration of data by International Telecommunication Union (ITU), World Bank, and United Nations Population Division.

Fig. 2 : Doppelgänger images circulating on Social Media

National Congress. About 32 people suggested that they were quite willing to look at the other side of trolling but, the interviews of Rahul Gandhi led them to believe that the trolling were nearly accurate. This survey indicates that the brand Image of Indian National Congress was quite negative and naive which literally gave an impetus to Narendra Modi led Bhartiya Janata Party to grab the positive brand aura.

4.3 Proactive Measures against Doppelgänger Brand Image and Trolling

In this section, we investigate from the details of the scenario and develop a set of initial recommendations that could help marketing campaign designer's diagnosis pending threats to their emotional-branding. Investments and take some preventive measure against doppelgänger brand image when it is in its nascent stages to before it outburst into a full-fledged negative image of the Political candidate. History has shown that dominant brands routinely fall from their stellar heights and struggle to regain their former glory. Disney, McDonald's, AT&T, Levi's, Kodak, and Coca-Cola are just a few examples of market-driven brands that rather suddenly went from paragons of marketing excellence to besieged icons losing ground to competitors (Haig 2003; Holt 2002; Stewart 2002). As per the Research paper, Emotional Branding and the Strategic Value of the Doppelgänger Brand Image: A three step plan Action which is implemented to monitor the outlook of a particular brand can be implemented to monitor the outlook of the candidate's image as well.

4.3.1 Monitoring Social Media Hints

Social Media being the cradle for doppelgänger images can be the ideal place to begin to scrutinize. It is the same medium that facilitates the rapid cultural diffusion of a doppelgänger brand image (i.e., the Internet) canal so facilitate the task of emotional brand monitoring. For example, campaigning team will have to routinely monitor consumer chat rooms, blogs, and Web-based media like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram which is often used by the younger generation to gauge the political buzz surrounding their marketing campaigns. A more sophisticated approach would be to use systematic techniques like search engine optimizations, online brand recognition tools etc. to assess when an emotional-branding story is beginning to inspire parodies, critics, and other signs of a backlash and to analyze the content of these jamming efforts. (Thompson, Rindfleisch 2006). They should be sensitive to both the frequency and level of intensity of these anti-brand sentiments meaning, they should monitor actively and the specific aspects of their emotional-branding story that are being subverted (and the adversarial meanings that result).

4.3.2 Identify and analyze the perspective of Lapsed Citizens

Public relations management team identify lapsed citizens, specifically those who have been turned out towards the candidate because of facing bombardment of negative reviews about him on social media. These individuals can prove to be a gold mine of information to understand the citizen's perspective of interpreting information available on the internet. There is indeed a wide sector of society which may intentionally avoid a brand solely because of its doppelgänger imagery and rather blindly believe the information available on the internet to be true (Aaker, Fournier, and Brasel 2004). There is often an attitude of "go with the herd" when it comes to political decisions. It is rather easy to reason with this chunk of society rather than trying to influence the anti-brand culture jamming activists. By studying these consumers' viewpoints(we recommend using qualitative methods, such as depth interviews, quick surveys and even focus groups), public relations team can assess which doppelgänger brand meanings are resonating with consumers and plumb the identity benefits they gain from this negative imagery.

There can be some revelations that the ideological concerns surrounding a candidate that inspire anti-brand activists to create and circulate a doppelgänger brand image (and that tend to dominate those representations) may not be that relevant to consumers or that central to their brand avoidance motivations. For example, the interviewees in our case study widely reported that they were negative about the party's candidate of being naïve and in his nascent stages of politics and didn't have negative reviews about the party as the whole. Thus, analyzing of trolling situations can be curbed and problem can be narrowed down to improve the Image of the party as whole.

4.3.3 Keeping Ahead of the Curve

In a dynamic and rapidly changing environment in politics and the industry, we believe that it is much better to stay ahead of the cultural curve than to fall behind it and suddenly need to play catch-up with competitors that have more resonant emotional-branding stories. Public relational team should begin modifying their emotional-branding strategy while it is still accomplishing its marketing objectives. Because of this, whenever the doppelgänger brand image starts to take a shape, they can subtly divert it to less relevant topic using the same Internet blog and social network and in the same subtle parody or satirical tone. This can be done during early and nascent stages before the negative brand image of the candidate starts to take a shape. However sometimes if the marketing campaign team has fallen back of the speed with the frequency and intensity of doppelganger image

and trolling, the best way to defunct the effect and impact of its intensity is that the candidate himself or herself initiates parody and in handle the criticism in a high-spirited and rollicking way. The survey conducted by indicated that nearly 59% of the people's opinion was that their emotion of deceiving or "pulling the leg" would've either neutralized or turned into awe or respect towards the individual by this strategy. "It's really difficult to handle criticism in a constructive and positive way. It garners respect!" says one of the interviewee in the survey.

V. CONCLUSION

In this research, we attempted to demonstrate that:

- Emotional-branding strategies may unintentionally result in generation of doppelgänger brand image and result in trolling on popular social networks especially in politics since it involves the entire population of society.

- Careful analysis of this imagery can provide insights into latent emotional branding problems that might intern help in construction of positive image of a political candidate. Although we believe that our analysis of emotional branding and doppelganger brand imaging during marketing campaigning of different parties may have affected the final results of the polls of General assembly elections held in India, there will be several other factors which might've influenced the outcome of the elections as well.

- Though emerging doppelgänger imagery provides support for our thesis, we also acknowledge that our research is limited by important boundary conditions and that these conditions represent potential research opportunities.

- These ideas are definitely congruent with research indicating that consumers' most cherished and respected candidates are those whose symbolic meanings play an important role in their self-conceptions and with findings that consumers can be negatively dicey when trusted specific candidates seem to violate their emotional branding promises.

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