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## **Opinion Study of “Product Placements in Bollywood Films” 2019-2020**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*For years we have been noticing traditional advertisements but with the increasing competition and decreasing attention span of audience the formats of advertising are transforming slowly and gradually.*

*The average modern person is exposed to around 5,000 ads per day. So with this increase companies are regularly in search of new ways to promote their products. As investment in product placements increases over the years, making it now a billion dollar industry, there is a necessity to deeply explore this theme to better understand what its main effects on consumers are and what are the opinions of the audience indulging in the films regularly.*

*The present research focusses on the opinions of audience about product placements focussing mainly on three latest films of 2020. The films chosen are of different genre and contains more than one product placement*

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **History of Films**

Cinema has changed the perception of people. The audio – visual medium, the moving pictures has a great impact over the years. Films have the ability to make people travel the world vicariously.

#### **Early cinema**

Cinema is not something invented by a single person. It all started when in 1891 Edison company demonstrated a prototype of Kinetoscope. The first to project moving pictures. The first to collect audience and build a cinema sort of environment were the Lumière brothers in 1895.

Films started with shorter time with just few minutes. Previously films were screened in music halls and grounds. The topic included short comedies, foreign lands etc.

#### **The Rise of Cinema**

Several national films were established in the year 1914. Films soon became longer and the narrative and storytelling played important role.

The film industry started to grow, people paid more to see movies. Slowly and gradually large studios started to establish and cinemas were built. The First World War greatly limited the film industry in Europe, and the American industry grew in relative importance.

Soon color was added to the boring black-and-white films through tinting. 1906 color separation method was used for producing natural colors.

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### **The Golden Age of Cinema**

Early 1930 was the year when full-length feature films were presented with added sounds. The year 1930-40 was when cinema became the popular form of entertainment. People started to visit cinema regularly. In Britain the highest attendances occurred in 1946, with over 31 million visits to the cinema each week.

### **Evolution of Indian Cinema**

It was in the year 1896, Lumiere brothers demonstrated the screening of six short films to some of the enthusiastic audience in Bombay. It became a big success and in 1913 the father of Indian cinema Dada Saheb Phalke made the first full length silent film. With the advent of talkies mythological entered Indian film industry. Films initially started in languages such as Hindi, Tamil, Telugu and Bengali. The concept of mythological films flourished in South India more than any other region. But by the 1930's, word had spread around the world about the vibrant film industry in India and foreigners with stars in their eyes landed upon Bombay shores.

Ardeshir Irani released Alam Ara which was the first Indian talking film, on 14 March 1931. H.M. Reddy, produced and directed Bhakta Prahlada (Telugu), released on Sept 15, 1931 and Kalidas (Tamil) released on Oct 31, 1931. Kalidas was produced by Ardeshir Irani and directed by H.M. Reddy. These two films are south India's first talkie films to have a theatrical release. Cinema of India has had a profound effect on cinema across India since the early 20th century. It consists of films produced across India, which includes the cinematic arena and cultures of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Jammu & Kashmir, Bihar and other states.

Films by Indian directors like Satyajit Ray, Mrinal Sen, Ritwik Ghatak, Girish Kasaravalli, Benegal, Adoor Gopalakrishnan, G. Aravindan and Mani Ratnam have been screened in various international film festivals. Other Indian filmmakers such as Shekhar Kapur, Karan Johar, Mira Nair, Deepa Mehta and Nagesh Kukunoor have also found success overseas. The Indian government extended film delegations to foreign countries such as the United States of America and Japan while the country's Film Producers Guild sent similar missions through Europe. Sivaji Ganesan, and S. V. Ranga Rao won their respective first international award for Best Actor held at Afro Asian Film Festival in Cairo and Indonesian Film Festival in Jakarta.

India is the world's largest producer of films. In 2009, India produced a total of 2961 films on celluloid, that include a staggering figure of 1288 feature films. The provision of 100% foreign direct investment has made the Indian film market attractive for foreign enterprises such as 20th Century Fox, Sony Pictures, Walt Disney Pictures and Warner Bros. Indian enterprises such as Zee, UTV, Suresh Productions, Adlabs and Sun Network's Sun Pictures also participated in producing and distributing films.

Incentives to multiplexes have aided the multiplex boom in India. By 2003 as many as 30 film production companies had been listed in the National Stock Exchange of India, making the commercial presence of the medium felt.

By 2009 the film industry in India drastically changed. In this period, Raj Kumar Hirani, Rohit Shetty and Karan Johar emerged as blockbuster kings with their larger-than-life projects, Anurag Kashyap, Anand L. Rai, Neeraj Pandey and others of their ilk rode a new wave with great outputs. Seldom in the past have two diametrically opposite kinds of cinema coexisted as seamlessly as they have done in the past decade. Nevertheless, it was not merely a time when art and commercial cinema were subsumed by a singular entity that we could call good cinema. The yawning gap between Bollywood and regional film industries also narrowed down following the success of many south Indian films dubbed in Hindi including Baahubali and KGF.

### **Product Placements**

A general definition of product placement for movies or television programmes is: ‘product placement is a paid product message aimed at influencing movie or television audiences via the planned and unobtrusive entry of a branded product into a movie or television programme (Balasubramanian, 1994). Karrh (1998) emphasized the link between product placement and payments from the adviser is, product placement is defined here as the ‘inclusion of commercial products or services in any form in television or film productions in return for some sort of payment from the advertiser’. Product placement is the practice of including a brand name, product, package, sign or other trademark merchandise within a motion picture, television or other media vehicles for increasing the memorability of the brand and for instant recognition at the point of purchase. Common practice of broadcasting has been that advertising is inserted within breaks in programs. But today’s audiences have enough choices and new technological advances allow them to ignore advertised messages by switching to other channels or skipping them altogether. This results in the proliferation of product placement on television and movies, as exposure of commercial products is engrained into the entertainment component of the program, maintaining audience attention. Alternative media vehicles are used by the media planners and brand marketers to reach to the customers with a distinct message so that the memorability of the message and hence the brand name increases.

For the purpose of product placement description, it is important to underline the specific elements of brand definition. The brand is a simple identification idea like name, logo, symbol, or trademark in one hand, and on the other, it is a complex idea that contains many tangible and intangible components. The brand is a hallmark of quality, the promise or assurance for the buyer, the icon, and the image which makes consumers buy products bearing the brand. In such situation, the brand becomes the symbol that connects the company and its products with consumers creating a relationship and represents the personality of the product in a changing market environment. Brand can be also seen as a sum of associations caused by names and symbols or a set of attributes such as personality, values, associations, and quality, affecting the purchasing process of consumers, functioning in the consumer minds, and, although associated with the real world, reflecting the perceptions of consumers. A brand can also be analyzed as a strategic resource of the company, comprehended as an asset, which should be suitably protected.

Primarily this research paper focusses on product placement in three of the latest films of 2020

1. Chhapaak – by Meghna Gulzar
2. Bhoot Part 1: The haunted ship – by Bhanu Pratap Singh
3. Thappad – by Anubhav Sinha

### **Chhapaak**

A film released on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2020 with popular star cast Deepika Padukone and Vikrant Massey. The film focusses on the issue of acid attack and the story of the survivor. It is a sensitive film with delicate yet powerful impact on the audience. The film is based on a true story on the life of acid attack survivor Laxmi Agarwal.

### **Product Placements:**



Mainly shot on the streets on Delhi, Chhapaak had quite some brand placements in the film, giving it a realistic approach. '*Aaj Tak*' channel where the actual survivor Laxmi must have worked was emphasised in majority of shots. With proper branding of the logo and website even the prime time anchor of the channel Anjana Om Kashyap has a longer screen time.

Other product which could be seen was *McDonald's* placed in the opening scene of the film. Where Deepika walks in a McDonald's eating joint and orders a McAloo tikki burger.

*Fabindia* a leading handwoven garment and fabric store was also placed very smartly in the film. It is when Deepika decides to gift Vikrant Massey a kurta, she is seen buying from the store of Fabindia. Not even the store with collection but also the screen behind the counter has the logo of Fabindia for few seconds. It is bit blur not exactly on the face of audiences but a very subtle way of showing it.

There are scenes where the craze for singing is shown through Sony channel's '*Indian Idol*' show.

### **Bhoot Part 1: The haunted ship**



(Cast: Vicky Kaushal, Bhumi Pednekar, Ashutosh Rana and Sara Gesawat)

Film released on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2020 a horror genre and a big banner film of Dharma Production, with lead actors Vicky Kaushal and Bhumi Pednekar. The film is about an unmanned haunted ship Sea Bird which comes to the shore. The film revolves around Vicky Kaushal who is a young shipping officer traumatized by his past. He goes around to unravel the mysteries of the haunted ship.

#### **Product Placements:**

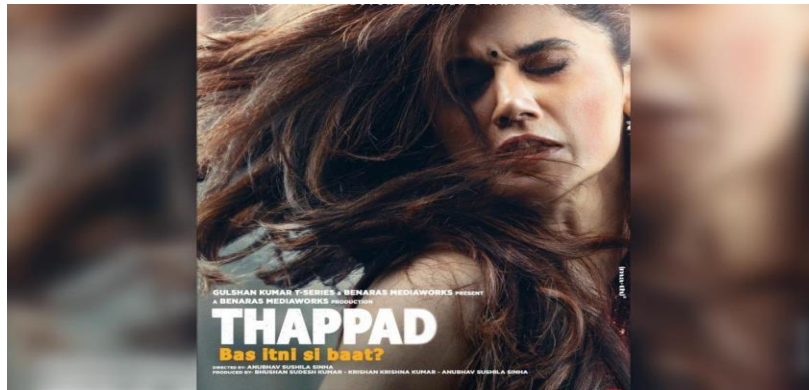


The audience normally don't expect any product placement in a genre like this as it has less scope of advertisement. But Bhoot film had a very popular product 'Maggie' noodles. With both verbal marketing and packet promotion.

#### **Thappad**

Released on 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2020, Thappad has a star cast of Tapsee Pannu, Dia Mirza and Ratna Pathak Sen. It is an impactful social drama which talks about the emotional and psychological impact of domestic violence. It clearly portrays Indian arranged marriages and the society we live in.





(Cast: Taapsee Pannu, Pavail Gulati, Ratna Pathak Shah, Tanvi Azmi, Dia Mirza and Ram Kapoor)

### Product Placements:



One of the product promoted in this film was *Prega News*. With proper placement of hoarding on a bus stop to the packet of the same is clearly emphasized.

Along with this '*India Tv*' channel is also highlighted as the lawyer's husband portrayed in the film is a renowned anchor of the channel.

*Kellogg's Muesli* a breakfast snack which is preferred by the elite class of the society is also shown. From eating it in breakfast to buying it from the supermarket.

Zee TV's famous reality show '*Dance India Dance*' is shown several times. In the protagonist's house and even the maid watching it.

The present research mainly focus on the opinion study of product placements in Bollywood films but with regard to the three films mentioned.

### **Hypothesis**

A hypothesis is a statement that introduces a research question and proposes an expected result. It is an integral part of the scientific method that forms the basis of scientific experiments.

- Audience generally notice products which are of their interest.
- Maximum number of times the products placed in a film go unnoticed as the screen time is less.
- The product placement doesn't affect the consumer behaviour.
- Film producers place the ads which economically help them fund the film.
- Films generally want to show realism and so place products in films. H6
- Logo of the company attracts more audience than verbal ads in films.

## OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this study is to provide a better understanding on how product placement in films affects the audience in terms of their attitude and buying behaviour. The need to understand how the audience process product placement underlines this study, with the argument that it is not what product placement do to audiences, but what audiences do with them that governs their success or failure by studying audience characteristics (demographics & psychographics) that make them more or less likely to counterargue or be persuaded by product placement or impact consumer reactions and memory differently. Also focuses on studying the process on how product placements work from the side of the film makers.

- To know how product placements in films works, the process.
- To know the consumer's vigilant eye and the capacity to notice.
- To know whether it affects the buying behavior of consumer or not.
- To see the significance of the placement and whether it's a successful advertising method.
- What benefit does the film get by placing the product?
- Popularity of the logo placed in the film to get noticed.
- Know the interest of audience.

## METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is the path through which researchers need to conduct their research. It shows the path through which these researchers formulate their problem and objective and present their result from the data obtained during the study period. This research design and methodology chapter also shows how the research outcome at the end will be obtained in line with meeting the objective of the study.

**Sample Unit:** Youth from around Surat, Vadodara, Ahmedabad and Mumbai

**Sample Size:** 130 people

**Sample Technique:** Non-probability convenience sampling and Snowball Sampling

**Sampling Area:** Mostly Surat

**Contact Method:** Personal contacts

**Research Method:** Quantitative and Qualitative

**Research Instruments:** Questionnaire, Personal interview and Group interview.

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**The Films Selected:** Chhapaak, Bhoot – the haunted ship and thappad. The films are selected on the basis of:

- Latest films of 2020 featuring popular star cast.
- Each film had prominent product placement.
- It had various types of product placements (verbal, hoardings, directly promoted by the actor)

**Variables:**

**Independent Variable:**

The Bollywood films having product placements are the independent variables. The viewers and the sales is dependent of how the product is placed in the film. Here as three films are focused mainly Chhapaak, Bhoot Part 1 – the haunted ship and Thappad the placement in these can be independent variables.

**Dependent Variable:**

The audience on whom the effect is studied are dependent on the product placed in the films. The audience are dependent as they are consumers of the product who would further buy the product after being influenced.

**Sample and Data Collection**

The sample of this study was drawn from variety of people from different background basically of age 22-26. At ages 18-24, people are considered the primary audience that film-makers and marketers try to entice (Dortch 1996). Many earlier studies in product placement used a student sample for this reason (Gupta and Lord 1998; Nebenzahl and Secunda 1993; Karrh et al. 2001; Morton and Friedman 2002; McKechnie and Zhou 2003). A total of 404 students from advertising classes participated in this survey and were compensated with extra course credit for their participation.

A total of 130 samples were collected. Majority from the city Surat, Gujarat. The sample collected were mostly male.

**Major Findings**

Findings related to product placements in Bollywood films

- Around 35% of the respondents watch Bollywood films once a month.
- Around 68% of the respondents are aware about the concept of product placement.
- 73% of the respondents have noticed a product placement in the latest film they have watched.

Findings related to product placements in films Chhapaak, Bhoot Part1 – the haunted ship and Thappad

- Most of the respondents did not watch these film but the ones who saw Aaj Tak in Chhapaak, none in Bhoot and none in Thappad film.

Findings related to viewer's response related to product placement

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- For majority of respondents product placements doesn't affect their viewing enjoyment.
- Around 40% of the respondents feel good when their favourite star sports a brand in the film.
- 50% of the respondents feel product placement is a good alternative to the traditional advertising.
- 47% of the respondents doesn't find product placements unethical or annoying.

Findings related to the impact of product placement

- 41% of the respondents sometimes do buy products advertised in the film.
- 60% of the respondents feel that using real brands in films make it more realistic.
- The feelings of 35% of the respondents sometimes get affected related to the product used in the film.

## CONCLUSION

This research study has discussed and established the acceptability of product placement as a marketing communications method. This research study also has discussed product placement as a marketing communications method. There was good awareness about product placement practice among viewers Product placement communications are, according to research results, recognized and recalled at normal rates though with prompted methods. As per the result of analysis product placement is a good communication medium when audience attitudes are concerned. Though the three films chosen Chhapaak, Bhoot Part 1- The haunted ship and Thappad haven't been successful is impacting the viewers. As amongst three product placement only one could prominently be recognized.

Respondents have positive attitude towards product placement practice in Bollywood Films and that result in greater acceptance of product placement practice in the films. Respondents don't mind if brand names appear in films and producers receive money from manufacturers for placing their brands in Movie. They rather feel it looks more realistic when actual brands are displayed provided in a subtle way. Respondents doesn't feel that product placement is unethical neither does it affects the enjoyment of their film.

Respondents also agreed that people would be influenced by the brands they see in movies. But there might not be a drastic change in the buying behaviour of the audience.

Majority of audience accepts the product placement practice in films and are aware of it. Though sometimes the way a product is presented and endorsed by a celebrity in the film does affect their attitude towards the same.

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