

‘Shree Ramacharitmanas’ and Celebrification Process based on Quasimodo Effect: Introducing a Model of ‘Segmentule Advertising’ to Create Future Celebrities for Political Campaigning

P. N. Jha

Director, School of Management Sciences, Varanasi, India

Abstract

Shree Ramacharitmanas intends to maximize the opportunities of becoming a celebrity-figure for more people, and thus implying to multiply the process of formation of celebrities (Celebrification). Several authors suggest their individual philosophies on celebrification-process. However, moving beyond the repertoire, the present paper, drawn from the design of an unpublished work in 1995 itself by this author, proposes a Model of Segmentule Advertising Communication by incorporating the tenet of Quasimodo Effect for providing an alternative process of celebrification in view of not only gratifying the innate desires of more number of people to subsequently become a celebrity-figure, but equally augmenting the publicity-arsenal for Political Advertising.

Keywords: Shree Ramacharitmanas; Celebrification; Quasimodo Effect; Segmentule Advertising; Future Celebrities; Cultural Intermediaries; Political Campaigning; Segmentule.

Introduction

Shree Ramacharitmanas has been one of the most pervasively read & worshiped scriptures and a ceremonial store house of spiritual heritage. It has already attained the status of one of the most highly acclaimed religious classics globally. Apart from throwing enough light on the diverse aspects of human life vis-a-vis cosmos, the religious text also talks about 'Celebrity', which is perhaps one of the most widely known terms across generations in almost all the various territories. *Goswami Tulsidas*, in his celebrated & sacred epic – *Shree Ramacharitmanas (Uttar Kaand)*, writes, “*Sut Bit Loke Eekhana Teenee, Kehi Kai MatiInh Krit Na Maleenee*” (Three innate desires in human beings – for son, for wealth and for being a famous public figure – never dismayed any person's wisdom or mental faculty). Celebrity is indeed a ubiquitously desired adornment sought by the entire human population. Among the usual categories of

Corresponding Author: P. N. Jha, Director, School of Management Sciences, Varanasi, India, E-mail : prof.pnjha@gmail.com

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celebrities, the ascribed and achieved types are expected to be endowed with considerably richer valency in terms of the various qualities prescribed for a celebrity, as compared to the attributed type where celebrities are formed by the cultural intermediaries through a process called 'Celebrification'. While the existing number of ascribed and achieved celebrities is limited, and growing at an insignificant pace in view of their emergence either on blood-line or by making exemplary accomplishments, the only category left is attributed celebrity where an uncountable number of desirous persons can be accommodated

by means of available formats of celebrification process, involving a partial transformation of a 'Common man/woman' to a Non-Celebrity (Future Celebrity) to finally transformed as an Attributed Celebrity. Because the available formats for celebrification process employed by the cultural intermediaries seem much insufficient to achieve the needful transformation target, the Paper intends to introduce a viable alternative format for celebrification process based on the philosophy of Quasimodo Effect and drawn from an unpublished work of the author in 1995 in regard to the conception of a coined term – 'Segmentule Advertising', a proposed Model for Advertising Communication for augmenting the generation of more number of non-celebrities (future celebrities) to be subsequently transformed to attributed kind of celebrities via further concentrated media exposure.

A Glance on the Background

A mere glance on the contemporary marketing environment makes it evident that we can no more afford to remain munching with the existing pool of ad-communication-mechanism. The creative philosophy needs more Indianisation. Celebrity format has certainly been a classical one, which has had been in use by the communicators since a pretty long time. However, despite carrying a vast pool of positive points pleading for the present unabated use of celebrity endorsements, the same has equally been attracting so many hazardous elements as well as apprehensions, including multiple product endorsement, concept of redundancy, clutter in brand endorsement by over exposure, problems associated with seeking a recognizable association of the celebrity & the brand, extreme usage of a celebrity called 'Lazy advertising', getting a detailed endorsement history and personal profile of the proposed endorser, plurality in consumers' self-celebrity congruence

perceptions, Vampire – effect, celebrity trap & celebrity credibility, celebrity's sudden involvement in some scandal / embarrassing situations, etc.

From an economic point-of-view, however, the most alarming issue is the heavy cost associated with the current design & format of celebrity-use. Agrawal & Kamakura (1995) mention, “approximately 10% of the dollars spent on television advertising are used in celebrity endorsement advertisements”. Further, it has clearly been tested by this study also that a number of star brands, including Lifebuoy, Amrutanjan, Surf, Dettol, LIC, Pond's, etc. have been built without any celebrity endorsement. 'Follow-the-crowd' concept is drying fast, a genuine sense of relationship is decaying with the consumers' belief of the stars doing the job only for the money and a critical shift in consumers' perceived credibility & trustworthiness pose further gravity on the celebrity impact issue. In the state of affairs above it would really be a more reasonable argument that in its natural life-cycle, the present form of celebrity endorsement / testimonial has already reached its climax. It is increasingly becoming a yesterday's news and perhaps the present period is the beginning of the end of our love affair with the celebrity people in advertising in the existing settings & formats. In the meantime, Charles Atkin and Martin Block (1983) emphatically indicate, “Despite the frequent use of famous endorsers, there is little published evidence regarding effectiveness”. Citing the outcome of an acclaimed experiment, the authors write, “Three versions of nearly identical pairs of ads featured either a celebrity or a non-celebrity character. On the average, the celebrated character is rated 5.98 while the non-celebrity is rated 5.41 on the 0-to-10 continuum. The difference is small and non-significant on the scale measuring believability of the message.”

Literature Review

Several mainstream authors talk about the 'common man', 'average man', 'ordinary people', and 'man in the street' in context to their role as possible celebrities. These very authors further indicate towards the manufacture and trade of celebrities. Chris Rojek (2001), talking about 'Celebrification Process', mentions, "I take 'the celebrification process' to describe the general tendency to frame social encounters in mediagenic filters that both reflect and reinforce the compulsion of abstract desire. The compulsion of abstract desire under capitalism transforms the individual from a desiring object into a calculating object of desire. Consumers do not simply nourish wants for the commodity, they routinely construct the façade of embodiment in order to be desired by the abstracted mass. Mass-media representation is the key principle in the formation of celebrity culture. To us, celebrities often seem magical or superhuman. However, this is because their presence in the public eye is comprehensively staged". Jha, P. N. (2009) comments that celebrification process basically talks about the transformation process of a 'common man' into a celebrity – a calculating object of desire by incorporating compelling standards of emulation in the subject through framing social encounters as per mass-media conventions of self-projection and interaction. It is thus a brand innovation technique and a tool of commodification applicable to 'a man in the street' for getting metamorphosed into the status of a celebrity. Graeme Turner (2004) opines that the most recent answer is to attempt to generate celebrity from scratch. This is not a new idea of course. The golden years of Hollywood are littered with stories of discovery, where the dental nurse or waitress is snapped up by the talent scout and offered a career in the movies. Recently, however, there has been a spectacular revival of the media's interest in manufacturing celebrity. Increasingly, they have done this by using 'ordinary' people, with no special abilities and achievements, as the 'talent'

in their programmes. According to Bonner (2003), the British TV is most likely to feature about 25% of a million 'ordinary people' on screen per year. Turner (2004) further talks about the 'cam-girls', who produce and manage fame themselves and what they have created is a form of what we might call 'Do-It-Yourself celebrity' (DIY-celebrity). Emerson, Ralph Waldo. (1865) has also indicated about the significant role of 'Representative Man' in the society. Turner (2004) adds, "Celebrity 'from below', then, is a mode of consumption, and it is powerful." Thomson, R. G. (1997) also suggests installing the 'average man'. Albert C. Book et al., suggest, "Testimonial – also called 'word-of-mouth' advertising, uses well-known figures or an unknown 'man in the street' to provide product testimonials".

On Quasimodo Effect, Jha, P. N. (2009) writes, "the term 'Quasimodo effect' or, more discretely, the 'Q effect' suggests something 'first' – unique, novel, original, fresh, uncommon, peculiar, away from the crowd, etc. It has its root to a fictional proper noun – 'Quasimodo', a unique character in a well-known fiction, 'Notre Dame de Paris (The Hunchback of Notre Dame)', by Victor Marie Hugo in 1917".

About 'Segmentule Advertising', Jha, P. N. (1995) opines that it is a possible advertising arrangement that follows a mass-market approach coupled with the customer concept and an intensive segment proliferation wherein an ad model (non-celebrity figure), endowed with an iconic convergence of the blend of all the traits corresponding to a 'Segmentule' is selected and is then endorsed as an integral part of the ad format.

On Political Campaigning / Advertising, William Wells et al. (1998) comment, "Political advertising is used by politicians to persuade people to vote for them and therefore is an important part of the political process in democratic countries". Zeigler et al. (1977) propose that earlier this approach was

like personal selling in the marketing-mix for products. Development of mass media and increased population led candidates to seek ways of placing their stories before the voting public in non-personal form, and advertisements were inserted in newspapers and on outdoor signs. More and more political campaign-strategy relies on TV. Jha, P. N. (1995) adds, "It is a form of social advertising employed to support the candidature of participants / contestants in election campaigns".

Apart from above, Britt, S. H. (1978) has given a crux of some more relevant psychological and other pertinent principles and tenets in order to augment the feasibility of the proposition. These include, Social Variables, Polarizing of Models, Repeating Exposure and Attending & Perceiving, Self-image, Potency of Pictorial Cues, Compatibility, Communicator-Audience Similarity, Language, Curiosity, Continuity of varied Stimuli, Opinion Leaders, Reference Group and Conformity, Psychodynamic and Behavioral "Contagion", and Simulation of Personal Influence.

Actual Theme

The communication-technology, available presently for the advertising activities (including political advertising) in particular, has equally been frenetic in the look out for a more effective, viable & dependable model of communication. And this is the actual impetus of the problem, where the author is going to put forward a new model endowed with a redesigned format of non-celebrity endorsement / testimonial applications based on the concepts of Quasimodo-effect, Customer concept of marketing philosophy, jigsaw puzzle of marketing, socio-cultural analysis of the spectacle of the extraordinary body and new dimensions in the consumer behaviour. The type of advertising put forward for the purpose has been named as "Segmentule Advertising". Its concept follows mass-market approach coupled with the customer

concept of the marketing philosophy and intensive segment proliferation. The proposed approach intends to address to the multiple expectations of the consumers individually, in respect to an exchange process by him / her, through a celebrity-format per se by facilitating an enriched environment of contemporaneity as well as a cluster of alike influences. Schiffman and Kanuk (1996) indicate, "A reference group appeal that employs the testimonials of satisfied customers is known as the common-man approach. The advantage of the common-man appeal is that it demonstrates to prospective customers that someone just like them uses and is satisfied with the product or service being advertised". On an important variable, 'Source Attractiveness Model', McGahey (1968) opines, "the effectiveness of a message depends on the similarity, familiarity, and liking of an endorser. The other two more tenets, 'Product Match-up Hypothesis' and 'Meaning Transfer Model' also whisper on the productive feasibility for a non-celebrity approach like the one going to be proposed. The above philosophies certainly favour the operational feasibility for the proposed model.

The Proposed Model

The proposed Model requires a modified practice in the creative philosophy as well as a complete reorganization of the traditional market segments. At the outset, the different possibility for segmenting the consumer-market would be identified. The recommended standard breakdowns of market segmentation here needs a complete restructuring to accommodate a vast number of new segmentation bases proposed under the scheme. The segmentation follows a three-dimensional division of the entire market in order to give rise to a large number of segment units. Under Dimension – A (Exhibit – : 1), the entire market is to be divided following a Three-Level Major Segment Bases (MSBs) – Level-1 : Language, Level-2 : Gender (Male & Female), and Level-3 : Age Groups

(Infant, Adolescent, Youth, Adult, and Senior Citizen). Accordingly, if a market needs division in 2 or more number of languages, each of them would be next divided by the Gender, and either of the gender-category would be further divided into the above noted 5 Age-Groups, representing the Major Segment Units (MSUs) Row 5. Row 7 of the

Exhibit below shows the decision-making blocks where, on the basis of Relative Weight Applicable to Proposition (RWAP) Row 6, the number of Operative Major Segment Units (O MSUs) within the aforesaid Three-Level structure of the MSBs would be decided by the Operation Administrator.

**Exhibit – 1 : Dimension – A
Three-Level Major Segment Bases (MSBs)**

Major Segment Bases (MSBs)											
Level-1 : Language	1										2
Level-2 : Gender	Male					Female					
Level-3 : Age Groups	Inf. 5-10	Adol. 11-20	Youth 21-35	Adult 36-59	Sr. Cit. 60-≤	Inf. 5-10	Adol. 11-20	Youth 21-35	Adult 36-59	Sr. Cit. 60-≤	
Major Segment Units (MSUs)											
RWAP											
(O MSUs)											

At the second step, under Dimension – B (Exhibit – : 2), the market would be segmented on the basis of 3 Core Segment Bases (CSBs) –Creed / Religious Affiliation, Caste, and Ethnic Group (Col. 1). Each of them may require further division as per the nature of the market under reference, and so a

number of Core Segment Units (CSUs) for each of the CSBs may be generated (Col. 2). Col. 3 shows the Core Segment Units with RWAP, which will attract the managerial decision once again towards selecting the Operative Core Segment Units (O CSUs) under Col. 4 of Dimension – B.

**Exhibit – 2 : Dimension – B
Core Segment Bases (CSBs)**

CSBs	CSUs	RWAP	O CSUs							
Creed / Religious Affiliation	1.									
	2.									
Caste	1.									
	2.									
Ethnic Group	1.									
	2.									

Exhibit – : 3below shows a large number of vertically arranged Focal Segment Bases (FSBs) in Col.1 under the third Dimension – C. Here, the entire market is to be fragmented on the basis of various possible types of occupation / profession (nearly 60 types) including Teachers, Doctors, Engineers, Lawyers, Farmers, Company

Executives, Government Officials, Clerks, Students, Housewives, Army Personnels, Police Personnels, Bank Employees, Railway Employees, Insurance Employees, Media Personnels, NGOs-personnells, Post Office Personnels, Shareholders of a Company, Coolie, Nurses, Tailors, Hawkers & Vendors, Shopkeepers, Contractors, Peons, etc.

Each of such FSBs may be further divided into two or more number of Focal Segment Units (FSUs) in Col. 2. Again the RWAP in Col. 3 has to be assessed by the Operation Administrator in regard to the different FSUs in order to declare them as Operative Focal Segment Units (O FSUs) under Col. 4. It is, however, a basic requirement under the

Model that the very nature and potential of a proposition on any of the Dimensions be considered for selection in the evoked-set for the segment, provided the same bears a meaningful and productive alignment and compatibility with its corresponding Segment Unit(s) on the remaining two Dimensions.

**Exhibit – 3 : Dimension – C
Focal Segment Bases (FSBs)**

CSBs	FSUs	RWAP	O FSUs						
Teachers	1.								
	2.								
Doctors	1.								
	2.								
Engineers	1.								
	2.								
Farmers	1.								
	2.								
Students	1.								
	2.								
Vendors, etc. ...	1.								
	2.								

The above set of activities would be followed by a next crucial job of selecting a more harmonious and competent non-celebrity figure (model) to be positioned in the proposed ad copy for each applicable segment unit. The model, so selected, is expected to be scoring higher among the contending peers on the scales for novelty, similarity, credibility, trustworthiness, and likeability, apart from being a true representative of the segment he / she belongs. At the same time, a proper synchronization among the nature of the marketable offer, design of ad message, and the personality profile of the selected model has to be ensured.

However, the actual job of selecting the non-celebrity figure for the potential segment unit(s) to be targeted would start with Dimension – C. Every selected Focal Segment Unit shall have one typical

non-celebrity figure corresponding to each of the selected Core Segment Unit(s) under Dimension – B as well as Major Segment Unit(s) under Dimension – A. This implies that in the event of having 3 potential Core Segment Units under Core Segment Base – 'caste' corresponding to only one applicable Major Segment Unit – 'adult (age-group : 36-59) are found applicable to a certain Focal Segment Unit under a Focal Segment Base – 'farmers', the number of non-celebrity figure to be selected would amount to 3.

The Model also suggests the nature of the ad-campaign along with the number of ad model (non-celebrity figure) to be employed. In this connection, The number of ad campaign would be in alignment with the number of Focal Segment Unit(s) being covered, whereas the number of the ad models would be governed by the number of Core Segment

Unit(s) multiplied by the number of Major Segment Unit(s) at Level-3, and the entire operation is to be repeated if another gender is also found applicable, and then the new operation would have the selection of the models as per the nature of the another gender. At the same time, the frequency of the aforesaid ad-mechanism shall have to accommodate the number of languages, found potentially attractive towards the full coverage of the market under consideration, by using a transliterated version of the original ad-script & model(s), either previous ones or fresh ones, as per the requirements of the new market. The ad models, on being selected following the aforesaid scheme, are further required to be properly positioned within the body of the ad copy along with a brief profile of the person in terms of the characteristics pertaining to various related

segment units on all the three segment bases with a view to ensure their effectiveness in the relevant market segments. The author would like to propose a term 'Segmentule' to represent that cubical structure of the market segment, that is intended to be represented by a selected ad model. All the three parallel facets (of six sides) of such a cubical 'Segmentule' would of course be corresponding to the traits of relevant segment unit(s) on all the three dimensions, and the selected model (non-celebrity figure) would represent an iconic convergence of the blend of such traits. So far as the execution of 'Segmentule Advertising' is concerned, both the print and audio-visual media (and now Social Media also) may be found effective. However, such a cubical 'Segmentule' may be seen, of course hypothetically, in Exhibit – : 4below.

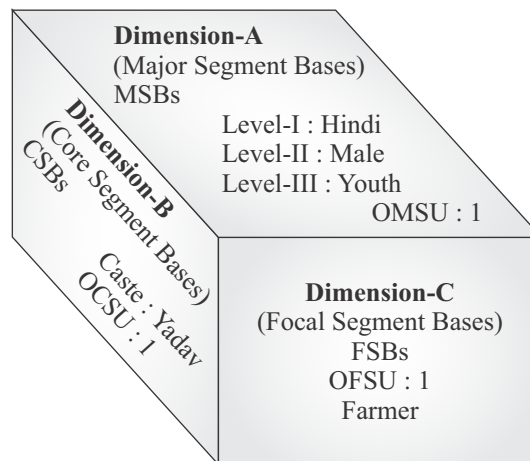


Exhibit - 4 :A Hypothetical 'Segmentule' Showing traits for the selected non-celebrity person on all the 3 dimensions

Conclusion

The epitome of the arguments above is that the value-system in the society is fast changing with a large fragmentation of the already established social communities in terms of political, ethnic, religious, caste, occupation, language, area, and etc. The recent debate in the Parliament over the caste-based census (2010) may be considered a glaring instance for the aforesaid opinion. A newspaper article “All in the surname (2014)” also indicates that caste affinity in a society amounts to

46%. Therefore, let the tough competitive advertising industry exploit this opportunity by resorting to a blending of the concepts of 'Quasimodo Effect' as well as 'Segmentule Advertising' to give rise to a modified scheme of ad operation by exposing the fragmented market on the above mentioned novel bases coupled with a true representative model (Non-Celebrity) for each of the segmentule in order to pitch-in for a perfect playing field within a target market. Such non-celebrities would subsequently be transformed into Attributed kind of celebrities as per the usual

operation of the philosophy of 'Celebrification Process', and thereby extending opportunities to a vast number of persons in a society to become celebrities as per the intent of *Shree Ramacharitmanas*, and equally augmenting drastically the celebrity arsenal towards political campaigning.

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