

Impact of Celebrity Endorsement in Public Awareness Campaigns

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Abstract: This article focuses on evaluating the impact of celebrity endorsements in public awareness campaigns focusing on the energy conservation campaigns done by KSEB. A research methodology has been constructed to carry out the research in an effective manner. This is achieved by adopting the qualitative research method of questionnaires with the Kerala consumers who have explained the impact of various PR activities by KSEB. This paper is trying to throw the light of the various factors focus on Impact of Celebrity Endorsements in public awareness campaigns and other PR activities. The present study collected through a sample of 70 respondents selected randomly from different districts of Kerala, this study has disclosed the reach of celebrity endorsements among public. The impact of other PR activities done by KSEB has been discussed. It is quite fascinating to see how viewers relate themselves to these popular celebrities and how this new technique grabs the minds of the consumers.

Keywords: Public Awareness Campaigns, Celebrity Endorsements, PR Activities.

1. INTRODUCTION

The strategy of using celebrities to endorse public awareness campaigns has been steadily increasing over the last few years. In the 1980s, ads primarily featured TV and movie stars, while today, cricketers, Bollywood actors and actresses and TV stars dominate the celebrity endorsement market in India. In a place like Kerala, various public awareness campaigns are endorsed by celebrities. A celebrity endorser is an individual who is known to the public for his or her achievement in the areas other than that of the product class endorsed. Celebrities are people who enjoy public recognition by a large number of people and enjoy a high degree of public awareness. Celebrities can be film stars, sports stars or others. This study explores the impact of celebrity endorsement in public awareness campaigns (focusing on energy conservation campaigns by KSEB). In 2011 a series of TV commercials endorsed by film stars came out. Celebrities include Mohanlal, Suresh Gopi, Dileep, Prithviraj, Jayasurya and Suraj (stars in mollywood). I have also studied about the impact of other PR activities done by KSEB.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Public Relations Society of America, a professional trade association, defined public relations in 1982 as:

"Public relations help an organization and its publics adapt mutually to each other."

In 2011 and 2012, the PRSA developed a crowd-sourced definition:

"Public relations are strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics."

"Modern celebrity may claim no special achievements other than the attraction of public attention" **Turner (2004)**

Entertainers are dominant in the world of celebrity as they are more “skilled in the differentiation of their personalities”

Boorstin (1961)

Sports stars are more worthy of their celebrity status as sport is “one of the few areas of public life that is truly meritocratic” and they are able to “prove that they are the best” **Giles(2000)**.

Campaigns involving celebrities are believed to bring more positive results if they are properly integrated than traditional non-integrated campaigns (Bertrand and Todd, 1992; Rogers, 1997).

Celebrity is an omnipresent feature of society, blazing lasting impressions in the memories of all who cross its path. | - Kurzman et.al (2007)

Celebrities influence on consumers appears to be larger than ever before. (Alperstein 1991)

A person who enjoys public recognition from a large share of a certain group of people and uses this recognition on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in advertisements is known as a celebrity. (Mc Cracken 1989).

Consumers form associations between reference groups and the brands they use and transfer this meaning from brand to self and one of the most reliable form of reference group is Celebrity Endorsers. (Escalas and Bettman 2005)

Celebrities are deemed to be referents by consumers, which refers to imaginary or actual individuals envisioned to have significant bearing on the consumer’s evaluations, aspirations and behaviour. The power of the celebrities lies in these influences that they exert on consumers, even though they themselves are physically and socially distant from an average consumer.(Choi &Rifon, 2007)

A top celebrity can get as many as 21 advertisers to endorse products (Ad Ex India Report 2007).

Celebrity has been defined by Friedman, Termini, and Washington (1976) as someone who is,

“..... Known to the public for his accomplishment in areas unrelated to the product class endorsed.”

According to McCracken (1989), a celebrity endorser can be defined as ...any individual who enjoys public recognition and who uses this on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement”

3. NEED FOR THE STUDY

"Testimonials by celebrities are below average in their ability to change brand preference. Viewers guess the celebrity has been bought, and they are right. Viewers have a way of remembering the celebrity while forgetting the product."

- David Ogilvy in 'Ogilvy on Advertising

Celebrity endorsement began in 1760s.It gained an extra potential than other advertisements. Public awareness campaigns also used celebrity endorsement well. They used celebrities to reach a mass audience. In Kerala there are so many awareness campaigns which used celebrities effectively. KSEB is a good example of this trend. They produced commercials which conveyed the need of energy conservation starred by various molly wood stars. Slowly people began to save energy only because it is said by a celebrity. Even kids came forward to switch off the unnecessary lights and fans. Those commercials became viral among public.

4. RATIONALE BEHIND SELECTING CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT

Public recognize a company by its PR activities. PR is the middle man between a company and its publics. PR has various tools. In those, celebrity endorsement has a wide reach. A message which is conveyed by a well-known person has a wider impact than other ones. Public feels celebrity as a person who is one among them. Public awareness campaigns contain messages which should be conveyed to a larger group. Celebrity endorsement is a boon to public relation activities.

5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How does celebrity endorsement affect people?
- Which PR activity influences more people?

6. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To examine the role of celebrity endorsements in public awareness campaigns
- To find out how the most effective tool of PR

7. METHODOLOGY

The proposed study on Impact of Celebrity Endorsements in public awareness campaigns (focusing on energy conservation campaigns done by KSEB). In the first phase, nature of the research would be identified. And then conceptual framework and research hypothesis would be setup. Then the research approach and data collection would be done. A structured questionnaire is designed and administered to elicit responses hence; the proposed study is both analytical and descriptive in nature. The primary data is collected through the structured questionnaire. The secondary data is collected from published manuals, magazines, journals of repute, published reports, research papers, and related web sites. As the next step, all the details of the survey including the questionnaire would be discussed. Finally the analysis and conclusion would be introduced. By this research methodology, the research would be more systematic and the errors can be minimized.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE:

The independent variables used in the study are

- Age
- Gender
- Occupation

DEPENDENT VARIABLE:

The dependent variables used in the study are

- Impact of celebrity in public awareness campaigns
- Attitude towards celebrity endorsement
- Impact of other PR tools

SAMPLING SIZE:

Out of the total population, 70 samples are drawn from them. Seventy samples are taken and out of which all samples are found to be useful.

STUDY PERIOD:

The study was conducted for a period of three months.(October 2014to December 2014)

QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN:

The primary data are collected through questionnaire. The first part of the questionnaire comprises of demographic factors with optional questions. The second part includes statements relating to their opinion on factors concerning celebrity endorsements and impact of KSEB activities among public. The third part is related to other PR activities.

8. DATA ANALYSIS

FRAME WORK OF DATA ANALYSIS:

Demographic data analysis:

The study of respondents' demographic data was vital in the survey. It is because these data could further help to understand and study their perceptions and behaviors towards celebrity endorsement in public awareness campaigns. They also helped me as a supportive data in research. Apart from that, age and occupations would be analyzed both in terms of sample populations and genders. Thus we could obtain a more comprehensive comparison and result.

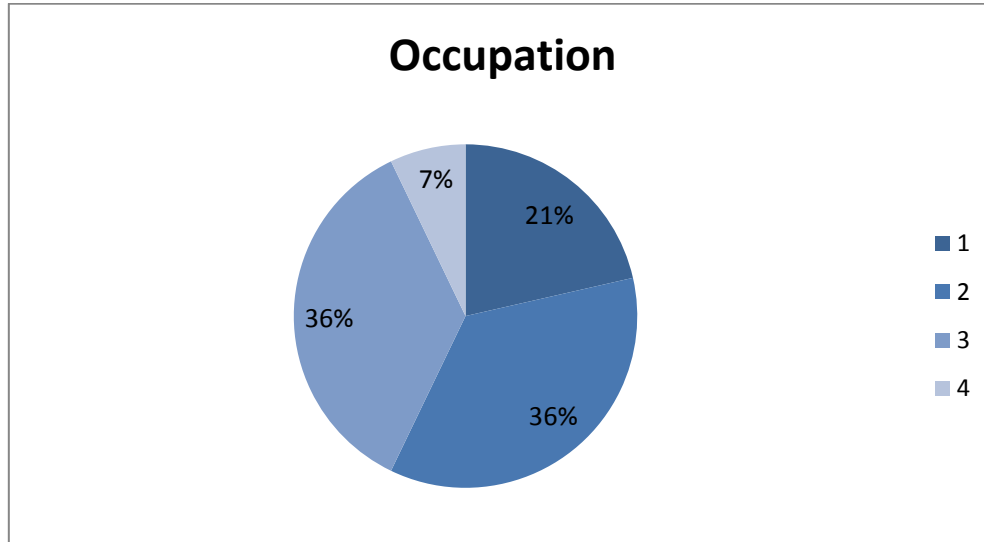
Gender:

Before the questionnaires were distributed, some targets were set for the data collection. One of the targets was that the proportions of male and female respondents must be equal. In Figure, there were 35 female (50%) and 35 male (50%) who participated in the survey, which met with the target.

Occupation:

A target for occupations was set before the distribution of questionnaires, which was to collect as many respondents who were currently employed as possible. In Figure 4.2, it shown that 36 % of them (70 respondents) were students and 64% of them (45 respondents) were on a job. The sample collected was acceptable due to time constraint. Among the respondents, 21 % (15 respondents) were working business industry. Some respondents (36%) were working in the service class. Minority of the 70 respondents (7%) were working in other industries and jobless.

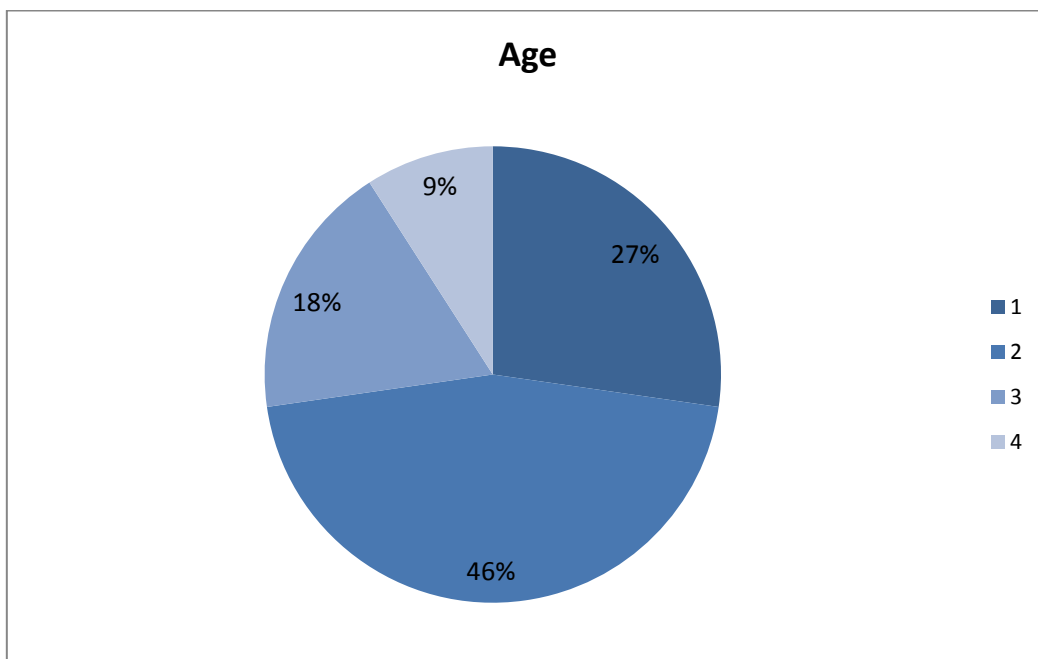
The majority of male and female respondents were service class and students (36%).



1=business class 2=service class 3=students 4=others

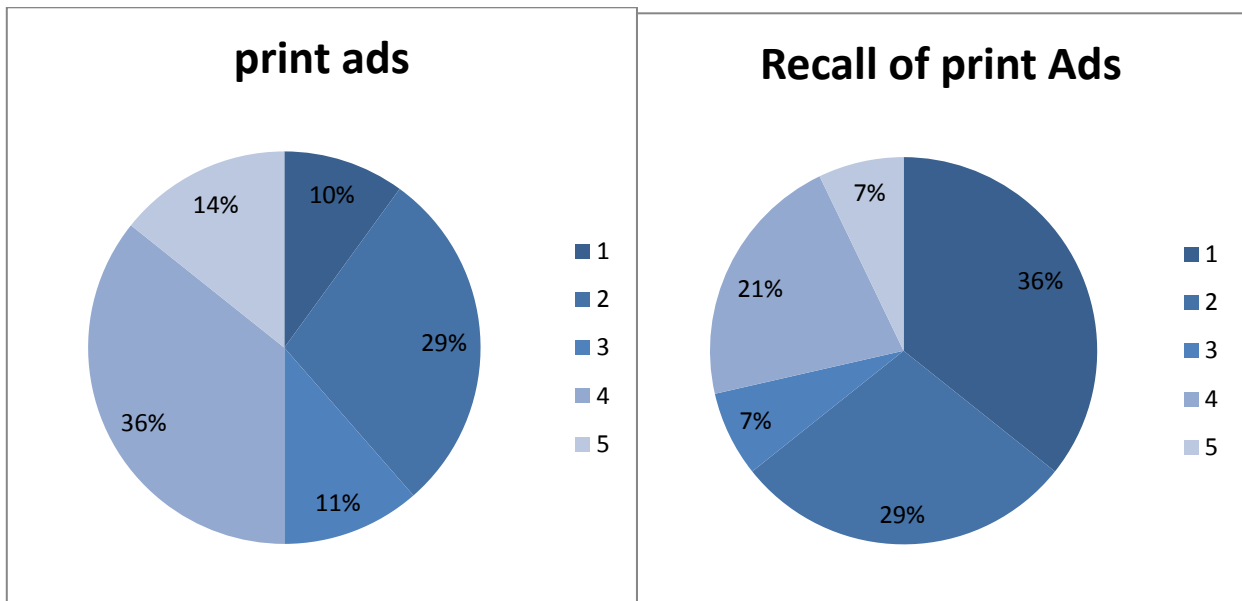
Age:

In Figure4.3, it showed that majority of the respondents were adults who aged 26-32, which accounted 46% (25 respondents). 27% of the respondents were young adults who aged 18-25 (15respondents). Minority of the respondents were aged, which accounted for both 9% (5 respondents) respectively. 18% of the respondents (10respondents) were middle aged. The uneven distribution of respondents' age could` be explained by the method of collecting data. Convenience sampling and snowball sampling were applied.



18-25 26-32 33-40 above 41

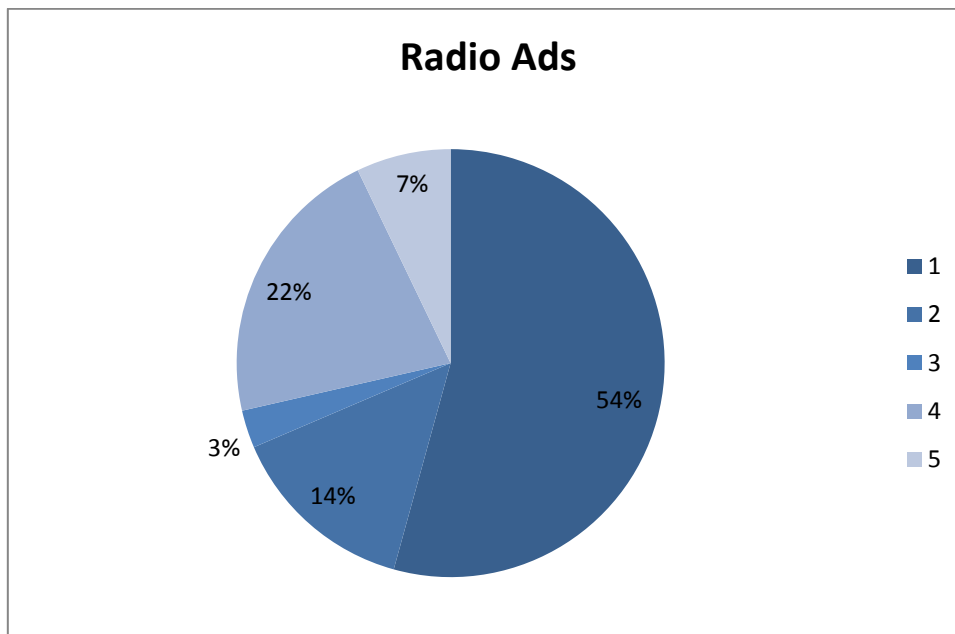
This part is aimed to understand the impact of advertisements came in newspapers on energy conservation done by KSEB (Qn 5-6). It is to know the impact of print Ads in public.



1=STRONGLY DISAGREE 2= DISAGREE 3= NEUTRAL 4= STRONGLY AGREE 5= AGREE

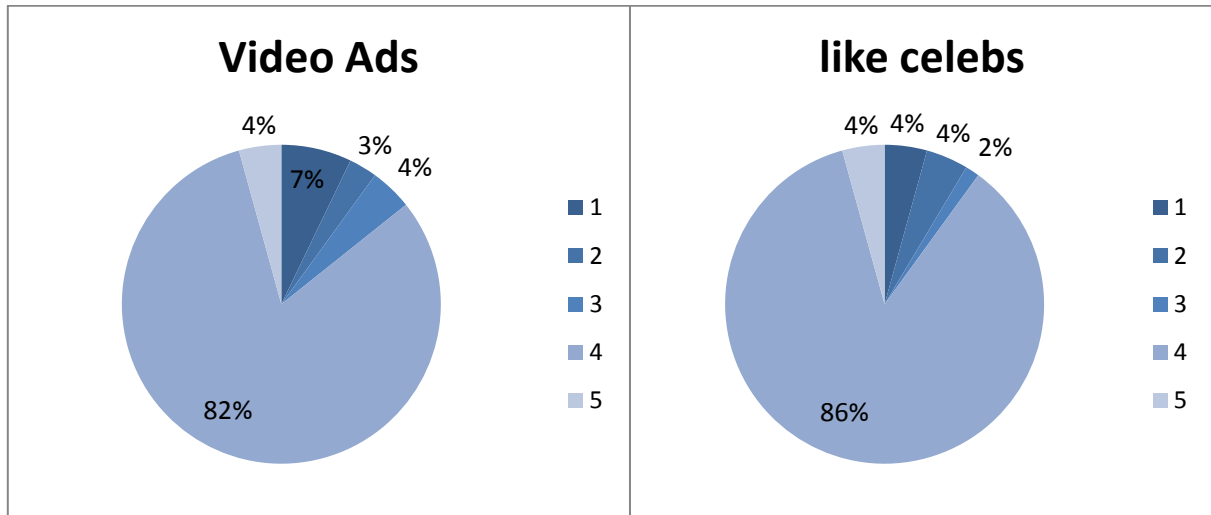
The first part helped to know about how many people saw the print ads published and how many can recall them. Almost half of the population saw the print ads and among them 28% could recall it.

Next section is to know the impact of radio advertisements in public. In recent years, radio has an immense reach. So by this part I came to know about the reach of audio medium among people. (Qn 7)

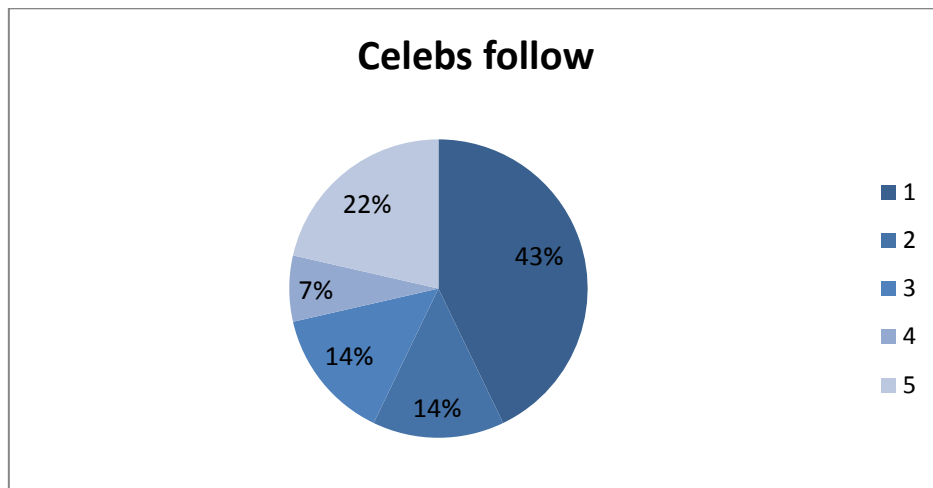


1=STRONGLY DISAGREE 2= DISAGREE 3= NEUTRAL 4= STRONGLY AGREE 5= AGREE

From this question I came to the conclusion that radio ads were listened by a few people. Majority was not aware of such ads. Radio ads about the energy conservation campaigns were not popular among public. Next part is aimed to understand impact of visual Ads conveying the idea of energy conservation. Celebrities like Mohanlal, Suresh Gopi, Prithviraj etc. were endorsed in those ads. This part also allowed me to understand whether the public wish to see celebrities in Ads. This also found out the opinion about the public in whether the celebrity endorsed in a public awareness campaign actually follows it.(Qn 8-10).



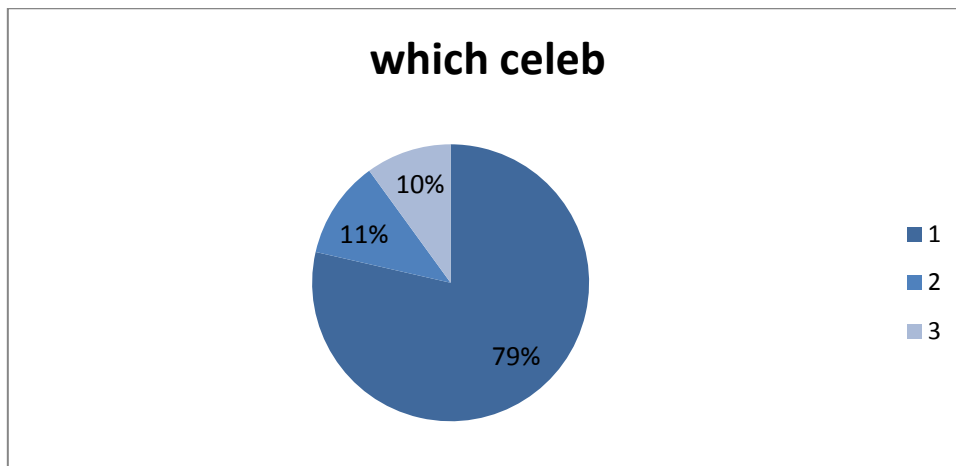
1=STRONGLY DISAGREE 2= DISAGREE 3= NEUTRAL 4= STRONGLY AGREE 5= AGREE



1=STRONGLY DISAGREE 2= DISAGREE 3= NEUTRAL 4= STRONGLY AGREE 5= AGREE

From this part I came to the conclusion that most of people noticed video ads than any other. They also remember it well even after a long time. 86% remember the video ads and 90% like to see celebrities in advertisements. In the opinion of people only 29% celebrities follow what they convey through advertisements.

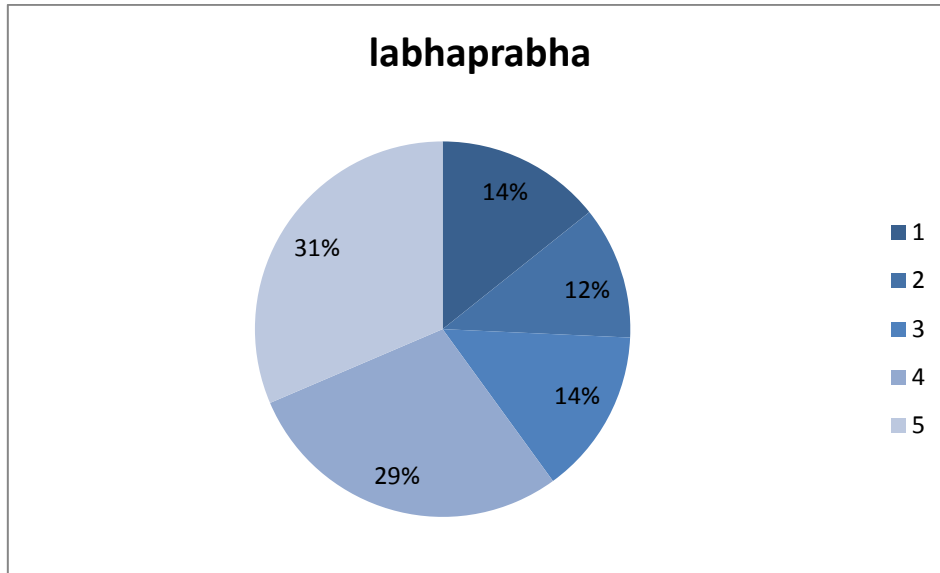
Next question allowed the respondents to select their most favorite celebrity. The question was made straightforward and easy to understand in order to minimize errors made from misinterpretation. (Qn 11)



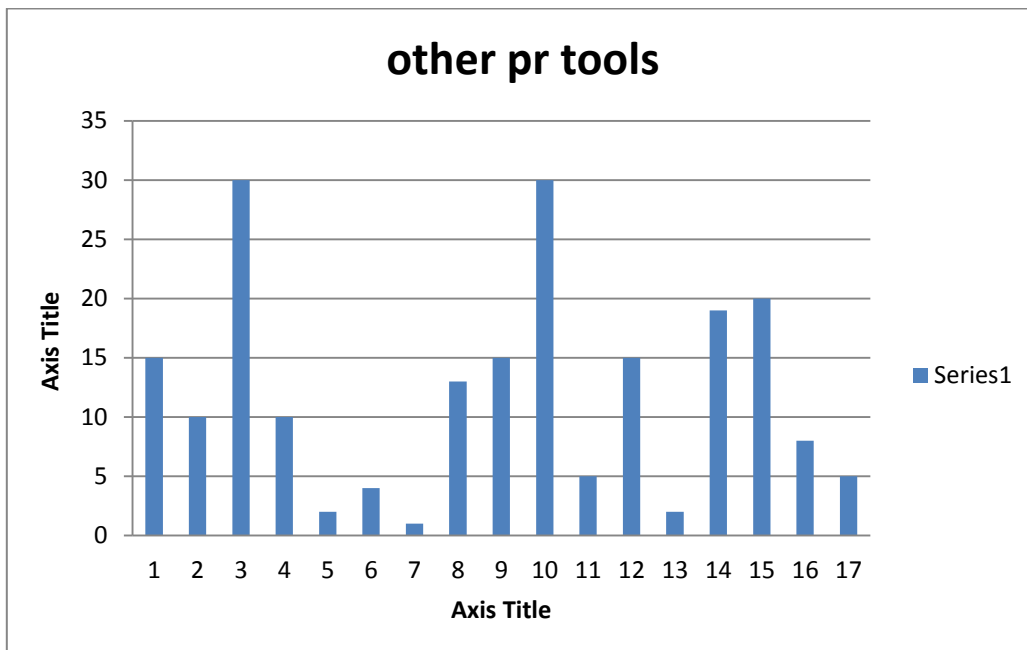
1=FILM STAR 2= SPORTS STAR 3= OTHER

Most of the respondents like to see film stars on the screen(79%) and a few like to see sports stars(11%). Only 10 % supported others. From this question itself we can see the impact of celebrities in public.

The last part of the questionnaire was to collect the impact of other PR activities than visual Ads done by KSEB during 2010-2014. It also allowed the customers to write note their suggestions. (Qn 12-13)



1=STRONGLY DISAGREE 2= DISAGREE 3= NEUTRAL 4= STRONGLY AGREE 5= AGREE



- 1) Spandhanam (a TV show in Doordarshan)
- 2) Website
- 3) Facebook page
- 4) Brochures (Oorjacheppu)
- 5) Twitter
- 6) Emails
- 7) Call center

- 8) Mobile App
- 9) Exhibitions
- 10) Newspaper articles
- 11) Sponsorships
- 12) Notices
- 13) Radio Jingles
- 14) Transit Ads
- 15) Theatre ads
- 16) Print Ads
- 17) Online Ads

From this part I came to know the reach of other PR activities. But among them celebrity endorsement only has a wider reach.

9. FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

From the survey results and data analysis and interpretation, it is clear that celebrity endorsement definitely impacts public awareness campaigns. As a promotional technique it is found to be quite useful.

FINDINGS:

- 50% of the population saw the print ads and among them 28% could recall it.
- Radio ads were listened by a few people.
- Majority were not aware of such ads. Radio ads about the energy conservation campaigns were not popular among public.
- Most of people noticed video ads than any other.
- They also remember it well even after a long time. 86% remember the video ads and 90% like to see celebrities in advertisements.
- 29% celebrities follow what they convey through advertisements.
- Most of the respondents like to see film stars on the screen(79%) and a few like to see sports stars(11%). Only 10 % supported others.
- Reach of other PR activities are far less than celebrity endorsement

SUGGESTIONS:

Celebrity endorsement is a debatable research topic.

- * The popularity of celebrity also plays an important role.
- * The source attractiveness model also rests on social psychological research. The message depends on the familiarity, likeability, similarity of the source.
- * It was observed that PR department of KSEB is doing so many activities to promote energy conservation.
- * During the interviews, respondents from the middle and the lower class people were the ones for whom celebrity endorsement was of value in terms of their decision.

10. CONCLUSION

Public awareness campaigns and Celebrity endorsements are both interlinked to each other especially energy conservation campaigns. Every respondent remember Mohanlal (film star) who says to switch off the unwanted electrical equipment's

in evening. People easily get attracted to celebrities and listen what they say. KSEB is doing a lot of other activities than celebrity endorsement. But majority of the people remember the video advertisements only.

11. LIMITATIONS

No research is complete without admitting the limitations that was faced while conducting a study which will contribute to present learning.

- * The study is conducted in some of the districts like Trivandrum, kollam, Malappuram , Ernakulam and Calicut in Kerala so the perception may change in the rural place or in any other city of India or any other part of the world.
- * Primary limitation is related to the generalization of the research results.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE:

Dear respondents,

I, Akhila B Pillai, student of MJMC (ASAS Kochi) is conducting a survey on Impact of celebrity endorsement in public awareness campaigns (focusing on energy conservation campaigns on KSEB). For which I need your corporation in filling this questionnaire. It will take a few minutes of your precious time. It will be made sure that information obtained is for general purpose only.

1) Name of respondent :

2) What is your occupation?

Business class Service class Student Others

3) What is your age?

18-25 26-32 33-40 above 41

4) What is your gender?

Male Female

5) The advertisements came in newspapers about energy conservation done by KSEB had a wide reach

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree strongly agree

6) you can recall many of those advertisements.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree strongly agree

7) The advertisements came in radio on energy conservation got a wide publicity.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree strongly agree

8) The advertisements in which celebrities like Mohanlal, Dileep et.all conveyed the idea of energy conservation is identified largely among public.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree strongly agree

9) A public awareness campaign endorsed by a celebrity has more reach.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

10) A celebrity endorsing an awareness campaign actually follows it.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

11) Out of following personna whom do you like most?

Film star Sports sta o others

12) You always participate in a contests like Labhaprabha by KSEB?

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agre

13) Did you ever noticed any of the following done by KSEB?

Spandhanam (a TV show in doordarshan)

Website

Facebook page

Brochures (Oorjacheppu)

Twitter

Emails

Call center

Mobile App

Exhibitions

Newspaper articles

Sponsorships

Notices

Radio Jingles

Transit Ads

Theatre ads

Print Ads

Online Ads

Any suggestion:

Thank you for your valuable time and contribution.