INTRODUCTION OF THE TOPIC

It is a known fact that the best endorsements achieve an eclectic balance between the product (brand) and the celebrity. Giving a brand a face is more than just a marketing strategy to increase sales or gain market share, it is a decision that can change the future of the brand forever. The term celebrity refers to an individual who is known to the public (actor, entertainer) for his or her achievements the areas other than that of the product classic forms of celebrity, like actors (eg. Amitabh Bachchan, Sharukh Khan, Rani Mukherjee, amir Khan and Ierce Brosnan)

Celebrity endorsement is a special type of advertisement which includes a famous person from film fraternity, athletes and sports, modeling world etc. It helps in promoting the product brand and also increasing the sales of the product. Choice of the celebrity, hence, is of utmost importance and is usually done based on many different parameters – appeal, looks, popularity or even just a fantasy figure to endorse a brand.

Celebrity endorsement not only has developed in recent years, it is being used from the past for promoting the product. This type of marketing strategy is used to promote the product and has proved in itself a boon in advertisement world. It is very expensive to endorse a celebrity for a product but in long run it has helped in increasing the sales of the products. Celebrities are also interested in endorsing themselves in the product as they get compensation for it and their image is been developed considerably. In the history of advertising – products or services, celebrities have played a seminal (primary) role. Whether what’s on offer is a soft drink, beauty aid or public health message, it’s the celebrity endorsement that makes the difference between recognition and anonymity (unknowns).

Hindi film and TV stars as well as sportspersons were roped in to endorse brands. Because of advertisement stars like tabassum (Prestige pressure cookers), Jalal Agha (Pan Parag), KapliDev (Palmolive Shaving Cream) and Sunil Gavaskar (Dinesh Sutting) became common. Lux shop was the first ad which was strategic and long - term. It was the first ad, which use star power. This brand has, perhaps as a result of this, been among the top three in the country for much of its lifetime.

The general belief among advertisers is that brand communication message delivered by celebrities and famous personalities generate a higher appeal, attention and recall than those
executed by non-celebrities. The quick message - reach and impact are all too essential in today’s highly competitive environment. The importance of a celebrity - brand match and the various roles played by them as brand associates show the momentum this strategy has gained in the last decade or so. India is a country where people star –stuck by film stars, cricketers, politicians and even criminals. Why? Populations of 1 billion, everyday people need something or someone new and clever markets identify these things and use this for their products and services through celebrity endorsement for their benefit. But how much star power is too much? “Does Amitabh really use Tide, “asked a 6 year old to her mother? Her mother laughs and says, no way, just a gimmick. “What does that do to the brand?

In today’s highly competitive markets, big brands are at logger heads when it comes to products, each having a similar product to that of rival. Where does one brand gain that quintessential advantage advertising, services, promise of trust, or even the all importance price factors? Advertisement seems to be the best platform where brands prefer to compete on – right from hiring the best advertising agencies to getting the biggest celebrities. What would be the formula to success then? If a management has a good creative agency, a large enough promotional budget and a huge star to endorse their brand then this give a feeling of security, success and triumph over the competitors brand. At the end of the day, do any stakeholders in a company (employees, contractors, customers, shareholders, communities the company supports with jobs) benefit from a celebrity endorsement?

Does anyone buy a product because a bollywood or TV actor/actress stand up and script in somewhat convincing manner? Are their distinctions in how consumers perceive these types of endorsement and respond to them? What happens when a celebrity endorser gets involved in a public scandal, or worse, dies? Will the product lose consumer support or perish?

The most important thing to remember is that putting a celebrity in an ad is not an idea in itself. Unfortunately, this is how most celebrities are being used in Indian advertising, where they just become a prop. Ideally, there should be an idea that makes the celebrity relevant to the products and the consumer. A celebrity's presence in the ad should be contextual. Celebrity endorsement cannot guarantee fool –proof success. The celebrity endorsement strategy must be integrated with target market characteristics, and the other elements of the marketing mix such as product design, branding, packing, and pricing. The message execution that will be mouthed by the celebrity must likewise be made clear and single-
minded. You can do this by using a celebrity because it ensures that people will notice you, and hopefully remember what the brand is saying.