

# Chapter 14

## Glocalisation Through Grassroots Insight: Analysing Piyush Pandey's Cultural Strategy in Indian Brand Advertising

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### ABSTRACT

*The chapter reconceptualises glocalisation in Indian advertising as a process of cultural participation rather than managerial adaptation. Through a qualitative, multimodal analysis of landmark campaigns associated with Piyush Pandey, it develops a mechanism-based account of how grassroots cultural insight translates into glocal brand equity. Integrating cultural semiotics with narrative persuasion theory, the study demonstrates how semiotic activation, affective fluency, credibility formation, and behavioural intention unfold sequentially within culturally embedded storytelling. The analysis further introduces a “dual-voice” framework, distinguishing between narrative authenticity and cinematic aspiration as complementary systems of meaning-making. By identifying structural barriers, digital-era tensions, and boundary conditions, the chapter positions the Pandey model as contingent rather than universal. Ultimately, it advances glocalisation theory by specifying the cognitive and semiotic mechanisms through which cultural resonance generates brand attachment in emerging markets.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION: THE CULTURAL IMPERATIVE IN INDIAN BRAND MANAGEMENT

In today's globalised world, brand management typically centres on the inherent tension between cultural identity and globalisation. Brands operate across borders, navigating diverse cultural landscapes while striving to maintain authenticity and relevance; as a result, brand managers face challenges in aligning global strategies with unique local cultural values. The primary challenge for brand marketers is to strike an appropriate balance between elements of a brand that can be effectively transferred and those that require modification. Striking this balance helps avoid being “mindlessly global” and “hopelessly local” (Hollis, 2008, p. 2). If a company opts for excessive local adaptation, the gains in efficiency and productivity achieved through globalisation will be lost; inadequate adaptation, on the other hand, can result in capital loss due to dissipating marketing activities. Piyush Pandey's unique philosophy offers a robust, real-world model for fostering cultural sensitivity. In a public interview, he has articulated his method of learning advertising by immersing himself in the country, i.e., travelling, “seeing India”, “seeing people”, and “meeting people” (Despande, 2024). By analysing his advertisements, a systematic model can be established that demonstrates how authentic local cultural input can be leveraged as a strategic asset to achieve plurality and build long-term brand equity in emerging markets. This study conceptualises glocalisation not merely as a managerial balance between standardisation and adaptation, but as a structured process of cultural participation grounded in grassroots insight. Rather than treating culture as a decorative background, the chapter positions it as a strategic system of meaning production that operates through semiotic encoding, narrative persuasion, and brand equity formation. Accordingly, the argument unfolds through four interrelated constructs: glocal identity formation, cultural semiotics, narrative persuasion, and brand equity mechanisms. Each construct is defined with attention to its boundary conditions in high-context, collectivist, and regionally heterogeneous markets such as India.

This chapter pursues three interrelated objectives: (i) it seeks to reconceptualise glocalisation as a culturally embedded narrative process rather than a managerial compromise between standardisation and adaptation; (ii) it develops a mechanism-based framework that explains how grassroots cultural insight is transformed into affective engagement and long-term brand equity; (iii) through the case of Piyush Pandey's advertising practice, it specifies the boundary conditions under which glocal storytelling remains credible in high-context, digitally mediated markets. In doing so, the chapter contributes to glocalisation theory by integrating cultural semiotics, narrative persuasion, and consumer psychology into a unified analytical model applicable to emerging-market branding.

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