

# Beyond the Dip: How Brands Leveraged the Maha Kumbh Mela for Impact

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**Abstract:** The Mahakumbh, one of the world's largest religious gatherings, serves as a dynamic intersection between tradition, spirituality, and modern commerce. This research examines the evolving role of marketing within the Mahakumbh, where brands strategically integrate their presence into the festival's cultural and spiritual essence. As millions of devotees assemble in pursuit of religious fulfillment, businesses leverage this unparalleled congregation to enhance brand visibility, create immersive consumer engagements, and align their marketing narratives with themes of devotion and communal experience.

This study employs a qualitative research approach, relying on secondary sources to analyze brand engagement and marketing strategies at the Mahakumbh. Data has been gathered from a diverse range of digital resources, including websites, blogs, news articles, and social media posts by individuals who have documented their experiences and observations during the event. By synthesizing existing literature and online discourse, the research aims to construct a comprehensive understanding of how brands leverage cultural and religious sentiments to shape consumer perception and engagement.

By analyzing marketing strategies implemented at the Mahakumbh, this paper highlights the impact of cultural values and faith on consumer perception, demonstrating that successful brand engagement requires a nuanced understanding of the event's historical significance and emotional resonance. Through this lens, the research provides insights into how companies may harness the power of tradition and spirituality.

**Keywords:** Modern Marketing methods, Power of culture, Emotional marketing, Experiential initiatives and engagement, Technological integration

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The Mahakumbh originates from Hindu mythology, where gods and demons fought over the nectar of immortality. According to legend, during the battle, drops of nectar fell at four sacred sites—Prayagraj, Haridwar, Ujjain, and Nashik—leading to the establishment of the Kumbh Mela at these locations.

The Maha Kumbh Mela is one of the biggest human gatherings in the world, and has been the biggest event of 2025 so far. It is a holy pilgrimage that is observed four times in a 12-year span and was held from January 13 to February 26, 2025. Millions of pilgrims attend the world's biggest peaceful gathering, the Kumbh Mela, to bathe in holy waters in an attempt to atone for their sins and achieve spiritual freedom. Each of the four Indian locations—Haridwar, Ujjain, Nashik, and Prayagraj—where a holy river flows—from the Ganges to the Shipra, the Godavari, and the confluence of the Ganges, Yamuna, and the legendary Sarasvati at Prayagraj—is the main site of this revered occasion. Within a month, the anticipated 45 crore devotees in 45 days were surpassed, with over 66 crores till the last day (PIB Delhi, 2025).

The Maha Kumbh Mela 2025 was held in honor of a celestial event that only occurs once every 144 years with pilgrims from all over the world attending the event. The first thing that comes to mind is: the unquestionable, absolute force of faith. The event has occurred as a spectacle of Faith, Unity and Tradition. It is notable how well some organizations—most notably spiritual ones—have used this enormous event to promote their brands in ways that most consumer brands can only imagine. With advertisers launching innovative campaigns to capture the attention of millions, this was the perfect opportunity for brands to shine. Mahakumbh was an ideal moment to combine business and culture. Pilgrims from all walks of life participated in the holy dip, seeking salvation and divine blessings. The Mahakumbh audience is vast, heterogeneous, and deeply spiritual. Marketers must be sensitive to religious sentiments while crafting campaigns. Kumbh is a complex, deeply spiritual experience, and for brands to make an impact, they must align with its ethos, not disrupt it.

The enormity of the event gave brands a chance to promote their products and reach consumers, increasing their brand equity and loyalty. To influence, attract, reach, and persuade the audience or consumers, leading brands showcased their distinct communication strategies from the bucket of integrated marketing communication (IMC) (Ahmad, 2025).

Billboards gave extensive visibility at busy areas like roads and transport hubs, generating widespread awareness. Conversely, stalls made way for direct customer interaction and offer individualised experiences that build confidence. When combined, they guarantee top-of-mind memory by fusing meaningful interactions with continuous exposure. A number of creative techniques that facilitate businesses' smooth integration into the occasion and promote both short-term and long-term recall were also facilitated. Branded trains, like the Ganga Gomti Express operated by AMFI (Association of Mutual funds of India), serve as mobile billboards that provide visibility across multiple regions. While mobile vans with audiovisual installations provided brand messaging straight to the audience, augmented reality (AR) activations produced immersive experiences that enthralled participants. By fitting with the spirit of the occasion, culturally oriented marketing, such as Santoor's "Sangam" campaign, increases brand resonance. Merchandise freebies guarantee long-lasting memory as participants take branded items home with them and QR codes on billboards and stalls allow for rapid digital connections (Mishra and Vijay, 2025).

In Kumbh 2013, conventional media like print, radio, and outdoor accounted for the majority of marketing expenditures, which ranged from Rs 1,200 crore to Rs 1,500 crore. The amount increased to Rs 2,000 crore to Rs 2,500 crore for the 2019 Ardh Kumbh, with a discernible rise in influencer and digital activation activities. With a rising focus on hyper-targeted ads to reach regional and rural audiences, Maha Kumbh 2025 was anticipated to cost more than Rs 4,500 crore. Just like pilgrims, brands worked hard for the prime spots at Maha Kumbh 2025, which marketers refer to as the cultural jackpot with 300 percent larger expenditures than the 2013 edition (Farooqui, 2025).

FMCG brands like HUL and ITC are leading the pack with spends exceeding an estimated Rs 120 crore, focusing on mass visibility through hoardings, on-ground activations, and transit advertising. It is also estimated that telecom players such as Airtel have allocated around Rs 80 crore-100 crore each for 5G promotions. Digital platforms like Paytm and Flipkart spent around Rs 50 crore-70 crore to tap into rural and spiritual audiences. Healthcare and wellness brands have also invested around Rs 30 crore-50 crore in kiosks, sponsorships, and awareness campaigns targeting pilgrims (Farooqui, 2025).

Mahakumbh served as an unmatched stage for brands to connect with a broad and diverse audience. Brands made every effort to engage customers, from PepsiCo's towering Mountain Dew installation to Dabur's oral

hygiene initiatives, and from Coca-Cola's sustainability drives to Eveready's safety solutions. With innovative initiatives and activations, brands are capitalising on this opportunity to connect with customers, build brand awareness, and drive engagement.

## II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

In the real-world context of the Maha Kumbh Mela, we took a case study methodology. This approach allows for an in-depth exploration of how brands engaged with this unique event. Case studies are particularly useful for understanding contemporary phenomena within their real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.

Data has been gathered from a diverse range of digital resources, including websites, blogs, news articles, and social media posts by individuals who have documented their experiences and observations during the event.

Key sources of data collection were:

- **Academic Journals & Conference Papers:** Studies on brand activations and marketing strategies during the events.
- **News Articles & Media Reports:** Coverage of brand activities during the Maha Kumbh Mela.
- **Company Reports & Press Releases:** Official statements and reports giving details about brand campaigns.
- It also includes **Government & Organizer's Publications** highlighting the insights of the event scale, demographics, and logistics..
- **Data Analysis: Thematic Synthesis**
- We analyzed the collected data through a thematic approach on the following basis :
- **Common Themes:** Recurring strategies like digital engagement, experiential marketing, CSR initiatives, and influencer partnerships.
- **Contextual Understanding:** Interpreted how these strategies align with the cultural and spiritual significance of the Maha Kumbh Mela.

## III. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This research paper examines the marketing and branding initiatives undertaken by Indian brands at the Maha Kumbh Mela, focusing on how businesses integrate their campaigns into the cultural and religious fabric of the event. The study explores key strategies, including addressing pilgrims' immediate needs, leveraging religious themes, and adopting interactive engagement techniques to enhance brand visibility. Additionally, it investigates the growing trend of sustainability-driven marketing, analyzing how eco-conscious practices are becoming integral to corporate outreach at large-scale gatherings. Through case studies of brands such as Reliance Jio, Patanjali, Coca-Cola, and ITC Mangaldeep, the paper evaluates the effectiveness of different approaches and their long-term impact on brand perception.

While rooted in the Indian context, the learnings from this research extend beyond the Maha Kumbh Mela and are applicable to event marketing worldwide. Large-scale gatherings—whether cultural festivals, religious pilgrimages, or global sporting events—present brands with similar opportunities to blend authenticity, engagement, and sustainability into their campaigns. By analyzing successful strategies in the Indian market, this study offers insights that can inform brand positioning at global events, demonstrating

how businesses can adapt marketing initiatives to resonate with diverse audiences while maintaining cultural relevance.

#### IV. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study primarily relies on publicly available internet sources, which may not provide a comprehensive view of all branding initiatives at the Maha Kumbh Mela. Many small-scale activations or hyper-local marketing efforts might have been overlooked due to limited documentation. Additionally, the rapidly evolving nature of event marketing means that new campaigns and strategies are continuously emerging, which this paper may not have captured in real time.

Another area requiring deeper exploration is the role of technological advancements in branding at the Maha Kumbh. While this paper discusses interactive experiences and sustainability-driven marketing, there is significant scope for research on AI-driven engagement, digital outreach, and innovative tech-based solutions introduced by various brands and government interventions. Future studies could examine how companies are leveraging drone technology, virtual reality, and AI-powered cameras to enhance consumer interaction at large-scale religious gatherings such as the Mahakumbh.

#### V. MAHAKUMBH OF BRANDS: BRANDS THAT LEVERAGED THE MAHAKUMBH EVENT

##### Amazon India



(Kheriwala, 2025), Amazon's convertible box bed

Amazon's "Dibbo se badhkar" campaign, which turns cardboard delivery boxes into portable beds, is an effort to provide comfort in Mahakumbh. To provide the employees a special comfort option, the e-commerce giant used its cardboard packaging to offer free portable beds. These beds were strategically placed at key locations such as hospitals, lost and found centres by police and rest zones and were free of cost! Amazon India approached the Maha Kumbh Mela with consideration and creativity (Kheriwala, 2025).

##### Fevicol



*(Fevicol, 2025), Two individuals wearing Fevicol oversized t-shirt*

In addressing the customer pain point of separation during large-scale events, Fevicol implemented an innovative guerrilla marketing strategy at the Kumbh Mela, an event renowned for its massive congregations. Recognizing the common occurrence of individuals getting separated from their families in such dense crowds, the brand introduced oversized t-shirts capable of accommodating two to three individuals simultaneously. This approach not only provided a practical solution to the problem of losing one's group but also served as a visually striking and memorable marketing activation.

The campaign effectively transformed a real and relatable concern into a high-impact branding opportunity. The oversized yellow t-shirts were highly visible, rendering them virtually unmissable in the sea of attendees, and thereby ensured maximum reach with minimal expenditure. The tagline "Hum Jude Rahenge" ("We will stay together") succinctly communicated Fevicol's core brand proposition, adhesion and togetherness.

Importantly, the strategy functioned as an organic amplification tool: individuals wearing the t-shirts became mobile brand ambassadors, inadvertently extending the campaign's visibility and reach without the need for traditional advertising channels. This initiative exemplifies an effective application of guerrilla marketing, leveraging environmental context and consumer behavior to reinforce brand messaging in an engaging and cost-effective manner (Kheriwala, 2025).

### **Shaadi.com**



*(Mishra, 2025), Couple wearing Shaadi.com wristbands*

Shaadi.com distributed special wristbands featuring their logo to keep loved ones together, symbolising the divine bond of Shiva and Parvati.

## Coca Cola



(Indian Retailer Bureau, 2025), waste management volunteers in recycled PET jackets



(Sanjay, 2025), Photobooth installed by Coca-Cola



(Singh, 2025), Cooler wall by Coca-Cola

Coca-Cola consistently stays ahead of the curve when it comes to utilizing major events. For Maha Kumbh 2025, Coca-Cola India and its foundation, Anandana, teamed up with the Prayagraj Mela Authority (PMA) and the PHD Rural Development Foundation (PHDRDF). The brand launched its Maidaan Saaf campaign, which perfectly combines sustainability and social responsibility, at this year's Maha Kumbh Mela. It made a significant contribution to the pilgrims' comfort and security with this initiative.

In order to enable sanitation workers, boatmen, and waste management volunteers to stay safe and to raise awareness of the importance of recycled materials, they gave away 21,500 jackets made from recycled PET as part of the "Maidaan Saaf" campaign. 10,000 of these jackets were given to sanitation workers, who used them to stay warm while they diligently cleaned the mela grounds. 1,500 jackets were distributed to waste disposal workers, while another 10,000 were distributed to boatmen traversing the Ganga's holy waters. The company's efforts exemplify how recycling can be leveraged to convert waste into valuable resources. The initiative is designed to mobilize collective action among millions of event attendees, encouraging active participation in reducing environmental waste. This aligns with Coca-Cola India's broader strategic objective of strengthening waste management infrastructures and promoting the circular economy by ensuring that product packaging is repurposed and gains a second life. (Indian Retailer Bureau, 2025)

Additionally, 1,000 women's changing facilities made entirely of recycled multi-layer plastic were placed along the river ghats. These structures, which were decorated by regional artists, offer seclusion, encourage the appropriate use of plastic, and inspire tourists to see waste as a resource rather than a burden.

Further, attendees could engage with unique experiences such as hydration carts, vibrant food court activations, iconic 3D OOH displays, selfie zones, and cooler walls by the brand. They created a 25 ft. gigantic wall of Coca-Cola refrigerator filled with all kinds of beverages from Coke to Mazza.

### ITC Bingo



(Kheriwala, 2025), Experience area by Bingo

Bingo by ITC! Tedhe Medhe was brilliant at appealing to local pride. They ran the Bhaukaal Lok campaign blending Uttar Pradesh's vibrant culture and bold flavors with the brand's quirky essence. To draw in and hold the pilgrims' interest, the brand created an experience area. To increase the campaign's reach, they set up a chaat fusion nook where guests may try creative takes on classic street cuisine, and an interactive social media area where guests can post about their experiences. There were BYOB (Bring Your Own Bingo!) Chaat Zones for making inventive munchies, with content zones for social media interactions.

Additionally, Bingo! held a Bonfire Event where travelers could savor the brand's distinctive flavors while listening to live music. ITC Bingo! made sure its marketing connected with both the younger and older audiences by fusing tradition with modernity, creating joyful and Instagram-worthy situations. (Kheriwala, 2025)

**Pepsico**



Sting's Device Charging Tower



Coca-Cola's Food Court Activation



Coca-Cola's Selfie Zone



(Mishra,2025), Magnanimous bottle of Mountain dew

(Sengupta, 2025), Sting's Charging Station

Pepsico also introduced its brands, Sting and Mountain Dew at the fair. By installing towers with more than 500 charging stations to recharge gadgets on the go, Sting energised the Maha Kumbh and helped in maintaining the levels high, giving pilgrims much-needed connectivity during the festival. Due to the Mela's immense size, it might be difficult to navigate and remain in touch. Mountain Dew's 30-foot-long lit bottle acted as a visually arresting navigational landmark. PepsiCo's striking solutions demonstrate how companies can combine real utility with visibility.

**Dettol**



(Kheriwala, 2025), Volunteers creating awareness about washing hands with Dettol

Nearly 15,000 sanitation workers were supported by FMCG company Reckitt through its main hygiene brand Dettol, which offered training programs and soaps to them in Kumbh. Under the "Dettol Banega Swasth India" campaign, the organization also sent out health and hygiene volunteers to all 25 Kumbh sectors, providing pilgrims with on-the-ground assistance and direction.

Rather than hoarding advertisements, Dettol launched the "Dettol ka dhula Kumbh Mela" campaign. To allow people to wash their hands, they placed hand-washing agents in Kumbh on the ground floor. More than 3 million liters of water were saved as a result of their distribution of 66,000 Dettol hand sanitizer kits.

## Flipkart



(Best media info, 2025), Flipkart Smartphone Baba campaign poster

Flipkart and SW Network unveiled the "Flipkart Smartphone Baba" campaign. The projected 400 million participants were the target audience for the campaign. Using a character named "Flipkart Smartphone Baba," Flipkart advertised its low-cost smartphone selection, which ranged from Rs 8,000 to Rs 15,000 and included models from Vivo, Poco, Realme, and Samsung.

A staff-manned retail centre, a "SnapMySnaan" photo service, and water bottle and towel handouts were all part of the campaign. Phones were distributed and real-time content was created through influencer partnerships. According to SW Network, the campaign combined customer demands with cultural relevance. Flipkart sought to provide attendees with ease and affordability.

## Britannia



(afaqs! news bureau, 2025), Chai Point created in collaboration with Britannia

In collaboration with Chai Point, Britannia introduced the concept "Chai Jahaan, Good Day Wahaan," which pairs chai with two Good Day cookies. The majority of Indians have an unbroken routine of drinking tea. It produces little bursts of happiness and connection. They used the love of tea that every Indian has for their cookies as a marketing tool.

With this promotion, they served tea with a pair of Britannia biscuits as a tea break adds a little joy to the momentous event, as a million pilgrims came together to celebrate spirituality and unity.

At Mahakumbh 2025, Britannia Good Day celebrated the shared human spirit through #AGoodDayAtMahaKumbh, an initiative that uncovers hundreds of smiles and untold stories within the world's largest human gathering. Amidst this vast congregation, Britannia Good Day and Schbang embarked on an unprecedented journey, to preserve and document. The adventure started with more than a dozen creators, including photographers and photojournalists, navigating the expansive event in search of small moments, the fleeting looks, the acts of kindness, and the tenacity behind each smile. Their cameras captured 144 personal tales over the course of several weeks, each one a celebration of joy, perseverance, and connections and a testament to the human spirit (Britannia, n.d.).

### Blinkit



(Kheriwala, 2025), Temporary store set-up by Blinkit

In order to precisely meet the demands of the millions of pilgrims and tourists attending the major event, Blinkit, the quick delivery agent, set up a temporary 100 sq ft Blinkit store in Prayagraj during the Maha Kumbh Mela. This calculated action made sure that participants' spiritual journeys wouldn't have to sacrifice convenience.

Delivery services were offered by the Blinkit store in a number of important areas within the mela grounds, such as Arail Tent City, Dome City, ITDC Luxury Camp, and Devrakh. Blinkit provided a carefully chosen range of necessities, such as pooja objects, fresh milk, curd, fruits, and vegetables, not just for individual use but also to allow devotees to donate at the ghats. In addition, they provided chargers, power banks, blankets, bedsheets, towels. Additionally, Blinkit made Triveni Sangam Jal bottles available, ensuring visitors had easy access to both spiritual and daily needs.

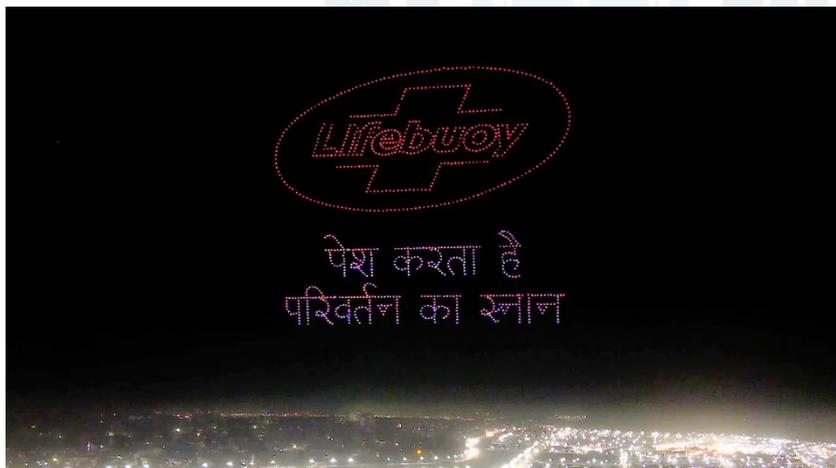
Blinkit's effort was notable for emphasising hyper-local relevance. Their services were satisfactory and satisfied the particular requirements of the occasion while attending to the pilgrims' logistical and spiritual

needs. This careful distribution strategy made sure that guests could concentrate on their cultural and religious pursuits without having to worry about acquiring daily necessities. (Kheriwala, 2025)

## Lifebuoy



(Lifebuoy 'Roti Reminder' Case Study, 2025) LifeBuoy Roti Reminder campaign in Kumbh 2013



(Social samosa, 2025), engaging drone show by Lifebuoy

This Lifebuoy campaign is among the most well-known Kumbh initiatives and even though it was launched during the Kumbh mela of 2013, it is worth mentioning as it won a bronze at Cannes in the PR category. By stamping the phrase "Did you wash your hands with Lifebuoy" on freshly made rotis at more than 100 dhabas and hotels during the mela in 2013, the brand started a guerilla campaign. In just 30 days, 2.5 million people received this "Roti Reminder," which encouraged handwashing as a way to stop the spread of germs. This not only spread awareness about hygiene but also subtly promoted Lifebuoy, proving that effective marketing doesn't always require massive spending.

Lifebuoy had a strategic relaunch done in the Mahakumbh, it used a very engaging Drone show to relaunch which mesmerized the pilgrims on the ground. To mark and celebrate this significant milestone for the brand, Lifebuoy orchestrated a mesmerising drone show at the Maha Kumbh. For millions of consumers present at the Maha Kumbh, witnessing this spectacle was not just a moment of awe, but a testament to Lifebuoy's enduring commitment to innovation, cultural roots and creating meaningful connections with cross-generational consumers.

## Havells



*(Best media info, 2025), Heated display placed by Havells*

Havells unveiled "The Coolest Hot Ad," a heated display at the Maha Kumbh, in partnership with Tribes Communication. Devotees found comfort in this arrangement as they gathered for their holy dip despite Prayagraj's bitterly cold weather. The installation, which was strategically placed, showcased Havells' energy-efficient heating solutions using thermal technology. The company's goal was to showcase its products and offer a service. The purpose of the advertisement was to meet a practical demand at the sizable event (Best media info, 2025).

## Asian Paints



*(Best media info, 2025), Divine intersections created by Asian Paints*

Asian Paints created "Divine Intersections," two 30-foot monuments modelled like paint cans, at Kinnar Akhada and Ramjanam Singh Seva Samiti Ashram to aid in reuniting families that were split up in the thronging Maha Kumbh 2025 crowds. These buildings, which were decorated with pictures of Shivji and Hanumanji, act as instantly identifiable lost-and-found locations that support government initiatives like helpline services and digital Khoya Paya centres. To run the project, Asian Paints worked with volunteers and local government representatives. Information about loved ones who were missing was submitted by users and shown on the screens. This large-scale celebration implies a major improvement in infrastructure and building, offering the engineering, technology, and construction industries a singular chance to demonstrate

the revolutionary potential of new technologies. This was an excellent illustration of how technology can create infrastructure that endures the test of time and the tremendous strain of human traffic.

Asian Paints claimed that the program demonstrated its dedication to the well-being of the neighbourhood (Best media info, 2025).

## Nerolac



(Best media info, 2025), constructions for vendor visibility created by Nerolac

At the Maha Kumbh Mela, 100 shopfronts were given to sellers by Kansai Nerolac Paints. The startup wanted to help street sellers and small business owners. Nerolac colour schemes were used in the shop front designs to give sellers unique areas.

The purpose of the constructions was to increase vendor visibility in the crowded areas. They served as overhead canopies and featured product displays, menu boards, shelving, and signs. The name and number of the matching Nerolac hue were displayed on each shopfront.

The shop fronts were built of acrylic boards and corrugated sheets for durability and ease of assembly. Display racks for tea vendors and fold-out menus for food stalls are examples of how they were modified to meet the demands of specific merchants.

## Tata Salt



(Srivastava, 2016), Tata Salt-branded thalis, drawing inspiration from Indian customs

The "Shudh Bhojan ka Shudh Aarambh" campaign, started by Tata Salt at Mahakumbh, revived the custom of pinching salt before meals for its health and auspicious properties. The company honoured salt's proper

position by creating a distinct space in Tata Salt-branded thalis, drawing inspiration from Indian customs. Thousands of pilgrims were served meals made using more than 35 tonnes of Tata Salt in 15 akhara kitchens, which served about one lakh branded thalis. The campaign reinforced the cultural and spiritual value of salt by reaching over 50 lakh believers over the course of four weeks.

## KDM



(Flora Fountain, 2025), charging tents by KDM

During the Maha Kumbh event, KDM installed 90 charging tents that could power more than 16 lakh phones. These stations, which were outfitted with Indigenous KDM-T Technology chargers, made sure that participants could communicate with their loved ones and share their experiences in real time. In addition to resolving a major issue, this project enhanced KDM's standing as a trustworthy technology partner.

## Reliance Jio



(Jha, 2025), JioKumbh app released by Jio

In addition to installing free wifi hotspots at several Mela places, Reliance Jio also released the "JioKumbh" app for the occasion, which allows users to find their way around, get critical information, and get in touch with missing family members. In this state of unrest, they sought to demonstrate the strength and dependability of their network.

**Hindustan Unilever's Kumbh Mela app** also helped devotees locate missing people, positioning the company as a socially responsible brand while increasing digital interactions.

**Patanjali :** Patanjali's participation in the Mahakumbh Mela demonstrates a strategic alignment with the cultural, spiritual, and environmental dimensions of the event. Rooted in Ayurvedic principles and promoting a Swadeshi philosophy, the brand's presence naturally resonates with the values upheld by the Kumbh Mela. As part of its sustainability initiatives, Patanjali facilitated the use of biodegradable leaf plates, thereby contributing to eco-friendly consumption practices during the mass gathering. Furthermore, the organization established a complimentary yoga therapy and meditation camp aimed at promoting physical and mental well-being among pilgrims. In conjunction with these efforts, Swami Ramdev advocated for a return to the foundational values of *Sanatan Dharma*, encouraging attendees to integrate these traditional principles into their daily lives. These interventions underscore Patanjali's broader objectives of cultural reaffirmation, environmental responsibility, and public health promotion.

### 5.1 Brands that offered comfort and convenience to the visitors

**Omni Gel :** By establishing a special "Rahat Seva Kendra" to assist pilgrims in coping with the physical strain of the occasion, Omnigel showed its dedication to providing care and comfort to Maha Kumbh devotees. The Rahat Seva Kendra provided massages to help relieve the agony that long journeys and congested regions cause, especially in the form of foot, back, and shoulder stiffness, so that pilgrims can feel renewed and revitalised.

**Haleon :** With its multi-brand health and wellness activations focused at promoting improved everyday health, Haleon (previously GSK Consumer Healthcare) made a significant effect at the Maha Kumbh Mela 2025. The company provided free medical services like dental screenings, bone density tests, relaxing massages, and prompt relief for digestive problems under its well-known brands, Sensodyne, Centrum Ostocalcium, Iodex, and ENO.

**Relaxo Footwear :** Comfortable shoes are essential for the millions of devotees who walk miles across the expansive mela grounds. Additionally, one may frequently lose or destroy the shoes they wear. Relaxo Footweares filled this void with its reliable brands, Sparx, Flite, and Bahamas. Throughout the mela grounds, kiosks were positioned to provide pilgrims with comfortable, reasonably priced, and long-lasting footwear. Relaxo made sure it was not just noticeable but also essential by offering a workable answer to a common problem. In order to strengthen its reputation as a reliable source of footwear for every occasion, the brand strategically positioned itself as a companion in the devotees' spiritual journey.

**Maggi :** With its "2 Minutes Apno ke liye" campaign, which emphasises sustainability and connectivity, Nestle Maggi made an important move. They built up resting pods called Maggi Corners for attendees to relax and to foster moments of togetherness. These nooks provided pilgrims and visitors with an opportunity to stop, unwind, and rejuvenate while indulging in their preferred MAGGI noodles. In addition to giving guests a much-needed break, the company established these comfort zones to foster connections and conversations among the commotion of the event.

Through this campaign, Maggi wanted to create spaces where people can connect, share stories, and make meaningful memories. Nestlé's ad also honoured the group of waste management personnel (safai karamcharis), who put in a lot of effort to maintain the cleanliness of the Kumbh Mela. By giving them warm blankets and filling lunches, the company showed its appreciation to the waste management staff, who were instrumental in keeping the mela clean. This action demonstrated MAGGI's dedication to sustainability and community welfare in addition to acknowledging their accomplishments

**RCPL :** By providing multifaceted services and product availability to improve the pilgrimage experience, Reliance Consumer Products Limited (RCPL) also made a big influence. Their "Aaram Sthal" (Resting Areas) and "Campa Ashram" provided pilgrims a peaceful, safe place to rest. In order to keep pilgrims hydrated and energised throughout their spiritual journey, RCPL also offered necessary refreshments.

## Uber



(ETTravelBureau, 2025), Designated pick up areas at Prayagraj Airport by Uber

Uber, a US-based ride-hailing service, announced a partnership with the Airports Authority of India (AAI) to offer effective transportation at Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj Airport. This partnership was intended to provide easy mobility for the millions of pilgrims and tourists who visited Prayagraj during the Maha Kumbh Mela 2025.

In order to improve passenger convenience, Uber set up designated pickup areas at Prayagraj Airport. These were backed by on-ground assistance and obvious navigation signage. For trips beginning at the airport, travellers can take advantage of a 25% discount of up to ₹200 when they book rides through the Uber app. (ETTravelBureau, 2025)

## Swiggy Instamart



(Mishra and Vijay, 2025), Scannable landmark installed by Swiggy

The S-PIN Landmark campaign was introduced by Swiggy Instamart with the goal of making it easier for pilgrims to return. Visitors could simply scan the QR code at the installation to save the location and easily find their way back, turning the logo into a trusted landmark amid the sea of devotees. Adding a touch of humour to the age-old Kumbh legend of lost-and-found reunions, the Swiggy Instamart stall features a cheeky sign: “Bichhad gaye toh Swiggy par milte hain” (Lost? Let’s meet on Swiggy). The playful message has resonated with crowds, turning the stall into both a conversation starter and a functional landmark. Swiggy Instamart is improving convenience and strengthening its relevance in crucial moments by fusing innovation and cultural awareness. Swiggy Instamart is making a big impression at this historic Maha Kumbh Mela, whether it is by assisting lost tourists in finding their way or making sure they have access to necessities. Swiggy Instamart has transformed their branding into a useful, humorous solution in a nation where being separated is practically a rite of passage (Mishra and Vijay, 2025).

**ITC’s Aashirvaad :** As part of its corporate social responsibility and brand engagement strategy, ITC’s Aashirvaad established designated hydration and food zones at the Kumbh Mela, providing complimentary nourishment services to support the health and well-being of pilgrims. This initiative aimed to ensure that attendees remained adequately hydrated and energized throughout the duration of the event, thereby enhancing the overall pilgrim experience while reinforcing brand visibility in a meaningful context.

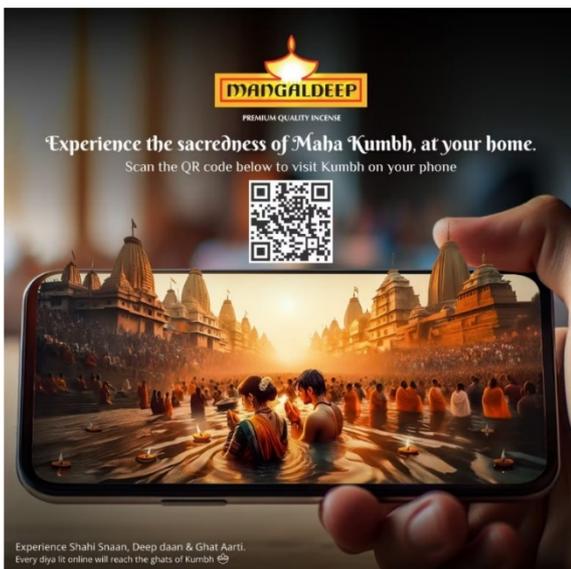
## **5.2 Technology Intervention: Brands which integrated the use of technology in marketing at the Mahakumbh**

This large-scale celebration necessitates a major increase in infrastructure and building, offering the engineering, technology, and construction industries a singular chance to demonstrate the revolutionary potential of new technologies. Mahakumbh 2025 is an excellent illustration of how technology can create infrastructure that endures the test of time and the tremendous strain of human traffic.

**Vodafone Idea :** At the Maha Kumbh, Vodafone Idea (Vi) launched the "Vi Number Rakshak" campaign to help pilgrims stay in touch and reconnect with their loved ones. Recognising the difficulties of managing sizable crowds, Vi created a Number Rakshak booth close to the Swami Ramanand Acharya Shibir Akhada to offer smooth connectivity and assistance to individuals who might become dispersed.

**Paytm :** For hassle-free digital payments, Paytm set up sound boxes and card terminals throughout the event. The 'Bhavya Mahakumbh QR' was also introduced by the brand to assist merchants. In order to promote financial inclusion and a cashless environment at the Kumbh, pilgrims can now pay with their cards, UPI, or UPI Lite at food vendors and parking lots.

**ITC Mangaldeep :** Attendees of Maha Kumbh 2025 had their spiritual experiences transformed by ITC Mangaldeep's use of 3D Augmented Reality (AR) technology. Devotees could digitally take part in important rites like the Shahi Snaan, Deep Daan, and Aarti from the comfort of their homes thanks to this effort. Users were also able to share their spiritual experiences with others and make original memories with a personalised AR filter. Mangaldeep also planned a hybrid Deep Daan ritual in which weekly tangible offerings made using augmented reality will be transported to the Ganges.



(Agarwal, 2025), 3D AR initiative by ITC Mangaldeep

**Remidio: Revolutionising Netrakumbh's Vision Health :** Remidio, a health-tech company, is spearheading the Netrakumbh project to address visual impairment in partnership with Sun Pharma and the Sankara Eye Foundation. The program is assessing 500,000 people and offering solutions for better eye health using AI-driven technology. Netrakumbh has already performed more than 170,000 scans, proving that scalable technology can handle public health issues during such a large-scale event.

### Fevicol



(Fevicol Pidilite, 2025), Kaala Teeka ad by Fevicol

The 'Kaala Teeka' advertisement was also introduced by Fevicol during the 2025 Maha Kumbh. By combining a historic cultural practice with contemporary technology, the effort sought to address the recurring problem of misplaced children during large gatherings. They had to do something meaningful in a way that created a difference.

A 'kaala tika', or black dot, is traditionally applied to children to fend off evil; this custom served as the inspiration for the advertisement. This cultural understanding was cleverly integrated with technology to produce a QR-coded sticker that gave kids in Maha Kumbh's crowded streets a way to identify themselves.

Important challenges were teaching parents how to use the QR code and coordinating with the event's management. Over 5,000 parents were successfully engaged by the campaign in spite of the logistical challenges, and as the event went on, the number increased even more. Fevicol's long-standing collaboration with Ogilvy, his creative collaborator for more than thirty years, produced the campaign's creative strength. This project demonstrates Fevicol's commitment to social problems as well as its inventiveness by fusing cutting-edge technology with cultural knowledge.

**Pulse :** A Maha Kumbh campaign was started by DS Group brand Pulse Candy as part of its "Pulse of India" promotion. A generative AI-powered movie describing the Maha Kumbh's history and significance was part of the promotion. White Rivers Media produced the video, which depicted the event through narrative and moving pictures.

On the grounds of Maha Kumbh, Pulse Candy gave guests Pulse-branded boats for transportation, bags for prayer items and Sangam Kalash jars for river water. There were also interactive games available. Through digital storytelling, the campaign sought to engage viewers across the country, while on-site events provided concrete links to the occasion.

### 5.3 Sustainability driven initiatives by brands

#### Ultratech



(Best media info, 2025), Sanitation personnel and collection bins placed by Ultratech

Prayagraj Nagar Nigam and UltraTech Cement collaborated on a waste management project for the Maha Kumbh 2025. Plastic trash during the event is being addressed by the "Mahakumbh ka Mahasankalp" program, which was launched on January 22nd and ended on February 28th, 2025.

At busy areas like Triveni Sangam and specific sectors, UltraTech placed sanitation personnel and collection bins. Plastic litter was gathered by workers, and waste was taken to a facility for sorting in a special truck. The project's main goal was to gather, sort, and process plastic waste for use as an alternative fuel for cement production. This attempted to alleviate the strain on landfills and dependence on fossil fuels. Additionally, UltraTech processed garbage that Prayagraj Nagar Nigam had independently collected. (Best media info, 2025)

Dalla Cement Works processed 400 metric tonnes of plastic garbage from the Maha Kumbh in total. Prayagraj and Lucknow municipal corporations already receive assistance from UltraTech in co-processing their municipal plastic garbage.

**Unilever** : Unilever has launched eco-friendly rest zones constructed from recycled materials, providing weary pilgrims with a place to rest. These sanctuaries also educate visitors on sustainability practices, aligning with the brand's commitment to environmental responsibility.

### Surf Excel



(Hindustan Unilever Limited, 2025), *Easy bag with waterproof compartment by HUL*

For pilgrims at the Maha Kumbh taking a sacred dip in the Triveni Sangam at Prayagraj, HUL Surf excel introduced the innovative Easy Bag. This special utility bag features a zip-lock waterproof compartment designed to store wet clothes. The simple yet unique design of the Easy Bag addresses the challenging task of managing wet garments, allowing pilgrims to fully immerse themselves in the holy traditions and rituals without worry. This is also a notable take on sustainability.

**Coca Cola** : Coca Cola's 'Maidaan saaf' campaign, as previously mentioned, is also a great example of a sustainability-driven initiative. By integrating recycled materials into essential services, Coca-Cola set a precedent for sustainable corporate engagement at large-scale cultural gatherings.

## VI. SUCCESSFUL TRAITS THAT HELPED THESE BRANDS STAND OUT.

The capacity of branding initiatives at the Maha Kumbh Mela to blend in with the festival's themes is what makes them successful. Campaigns are most effective when they:

1. *Address Immediate Needs*: Offering answers to issues like connectivity, hydration, and sanitation that arise when people attend such a large event as was seen in the case of several brands like RelianceJio, Coca-cola, Mountain Dew, Dettol etc.
2. *Align with Religious Themes*: Audiences find great resonance when values like community, health, and well-being are embodied. Patanjali and ITC Mangaldeep leveraged this scope.
3. *Leverage the magnitude*: Brands can increase their visibility among millions of people by adopting an expansive and significant mindset. This idea was magnificently adopted by Pepsico's Mountain dew and Sting.
4. *Emphasise Cultural Relevance*: Authenticity and emotional appeal are guaranteed when advertising is connected to Indian customs and culture. Tata Salt, Bingo and a lot of other brands integrated cultural authenticity into their campaigns.

The marketing initiatives by brands exemplify how companies can successfully merge cultural authenticity, religious themes, and large-scale outreach to create lasting impressions. By addressing immediate needs, resonating with spiritual values, and embracing the festival's magnitude, brands establish deep connections with attendees. As technology advances, integrating digital strategies could further enhance engagement, making future Maha Kumbh campaigns even more impactful. These success moments in marketing make way for the new marketing trends that marketers can adopt and take note of.

## VII. MARKETING TRENDS SPOTTED AT MAHAKUMBH 2025

1. *Sustainability-Focused Initiatives:* To keep up with the growing environmental consciousness, brands are pushing recycling and employing eco-friendly products. Sustainability-focused initiatives are emerging as a powerful trend in marketing, particularly in large-scale cultural gatherings like the Maha Kumbh Mela. As environmental consciousness grows, brands are recognizing the need to integrate eco-friendly solutions into their campaigns, ensuring relevance to both the audience and the event's spiritual ethos.
2. *Interactive Experiences:* Businesses are experimenting with immersive engagement tactics, ranging from mobile apps that assist pilgrims to virtual reality storytelling. Companies are leveraging augmented reality, gamified campaigns, and live storytelling to create deeper connections with attendees. From AI-powered spiritual guidance booths to interactive devotional art installations, brands are moving beyond static advertisements to experiences that resonate emotionally and culturally.
3. *Influencer Pilgrimages:* A number of brands worked with video producers and digital influencers to tell the festival's story through accessible, personal perspectives. While ITC is collaborating with local Instagram influencers for its Bingo snack promotion, Amazon has teamed up with both national and regional influencers to promote their box beds for devotees at Kumbh. Massive traction has resulted from the influencer effort, with posts receiving 547.91 million views, 380.52K comments, and 9.07 million shares as quoted by Vaibhav Gupta, Co-founder and CPO, KlugKlug (Farooqui, 2025). In order to evaluate audience sentiment and keep an eye on digital interactions, Qoruz examined popular terms including MahaKumbh, KumbhMela, HolyDip, Sangam, KumbhFestival, and MahaKumbh2025. This report demonstrates how companies are deliberately using digital amplification and influencer partnerships to have a powerful presence at the major event.

More than just a religious occasion, Maha Kumbh 2025 turned into a huge marketing arena where companies combined innovation, technology, and tradition to produce unforgettable experiences. Businesses made sure they had the most visibility possible while meaningfully interacting with millions of pilgrims by combining digital advertising with on-ground activations. The Maha Kumbh is a living example of how cultural events can be effective venues for consumer interaction and brand storytelling.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

The Maha Kumbh Mela 2025 proved to be a treasure trove for companies seeking to meaningfully engage with millions of people. With more than 60 crore attendees, it was the ideal platform for companies to integrate themselves into the event's cultural and spiritual fabric in addition to showcasing their goods. Instead of merely advertising, companies like Coca-Cola, Dabur, Pepsico, and Amazon produced authentic experiences that connected with the pilgrims and provided them with both useful solutions and sentimental value.

## 8.1 Return on Investments: Measuring the successful performance of brand campaigns.

At the Maha Kumbh, experiential marketing has shown itself to be a very successful tactic for companies looking to increase consumer engagement and brand recall. Businesses spend crores on CSR-driven initiatives which give companies a special opportunity to interact with more than 450 million pilgrims, encouraging a sense of community. It is a profitable investment for brands, with the correct implementation, the predicted return on investment and better driven by enhanced brand affinity, consumer loyalty, and long-term market effect (Nair, 2025).

Maha Kumbh advertisements demonstrated through emergency bracelets, drone rescues, or AI-driven hygiene awareness. Henceforth, the true performance indicator is not the sales figure, but how many people thanked your brand, recall that brand, take or use their campaign hashtags in their pilgrimage selfies.

## 8.2 Cultural Sensitivity and Opportunism

The connection between marketing and cultural values at Mahakumbh unfolds in several ways:

1. *Resonance with Spiritual Themes:* Brands participated in the Mahakumbh crafted message that respects and reflects the event's sacred nature. They connected their messages to the spiritual and cultural importance to make an impression than those that only used mass advertising (Bhushan, 2025),
2. *Social Responsibility and Ethical Marketing:* Many businesses use the Mahakumbh as an opportunity for corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives. Sustainable campaigns, waste management programs, and health services align brands with the communal well-being values.
3. *Amplification of Cultural Identity:* Brands enhance their visibility by associating themselves with Indian traditional aesthetics, regional languages, and storytelling that reflect the Mahakumbh's significance allow companies to establish deeper cultural credibility.
4. *Faith-Based Consumer Trust:* Brands ensured their presence to integrate faith-driven principles which cultivated trust and long-term brand loyalty. Companies succeeded because they weren't selling a product; they were building a community.

The Maha Kumbh isn't about impulsive buying or quick conversions like a music festival or athletic event. Although 45 crore people congregate at the Maha Kumbh with a common goal. It serves as a reminder that some of the most insightful marketing lessons are learnt from studying human behaviour in its most natural setting rather than in boardrooms (Bhushan, 2025).

At Mahakumbh, brands that respected religious sensibilities, provided genuine value, and included their message into the devotional experience are made an impression with millions of Indian and international media.

## 8.3 Lessons for Marketers

The Kumbh Mela teaches contemporary brands important lessons about emotional resonance, inclusivity, consistent messaging, sincerity, and adaptation. By putting these ideas into practice, brands can develop enduring loyalty, establish a purpose-driven identity and strengthen, deepen their relationships with their target audience.

In fact, the Kumbh Mela serves as a reminder that branding is all about building relationships, experiences, and a feeling of community rather than only marketing goods. A well-planned campaign can have a lasting effect, regardless of the size of the company. The secret lies in blending your brand's vision with the ethos of the event.

The Kumbh Mela, a multitude of brand activations complement traditional advertising efforts and facilitate product sampling on a large scale. Social media further amplifies these activities, extending their reach and visibility. Moreover, some organizations leverage the Kumbh Mela as an opportunity to develop corporate social responsibility CSR oriented brand activations, aiming to create award-worthy initiatives.

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