

# **“Critical Review of Television as an Effective Medium of Communication to Channelize Desired Social Change in India”**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*This paper investigates the various key questions related with the effectiveness of television as best medium of advertisement of Social advertisement by the country. The social ads on the television are under the scanner as effectiveness of advertisement on television today when other mediums of advertisements are emerging and gaining popularity is always questioned. This paper also tries to examine why television is considered to be the best medium of the social ads in India and also examine whether the role of government in social advertisement is satisfactory or not. This paper is presented in the form of research essay presenting the finding and inferences in the form of linking paragraphs.*

**Keywords – Economic change, Persuasiveness, Social Advertisement, social awareness, Television Advertisement**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Ideal role of government is of a welfare state. Under this role of welfare state the government targets at raising the standards of living of people by establishment of various incomes support programs. These programs target at Unemployment, Childcare, Disability and old age etc. The major difficulty lies in balancing the Individual responsiveness and such program's integrity. Social Advertisement helps in ensuring the balance by educating the people and bringing the desired change in the behavior of the public in the country. Social advertisement is that kind of advertisement which helps the governments to bring desirable change in the behavior of Public. This change is generally related with better hygiene, public safety, health, awareness and other welfare issues. In India naming some of these would be beti bacaho beti padhao, swachh bharat, save water, Use of helmet while driving, prohibition of the use of tobacco products etc are few. These social changes are highly desired for both economic and social welfare of the country. Nowadays a lot of advertisements with a social message of creating awareness among the masses of India about key issues which are of prime importance and act as a democratic right to the common man. These social advertisements are either served by government as a part of their public expenditure or operate as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activity for corporate houses.

### **1.1 Traces in literature:**

This topic has no direct reference in the literature as it has not been studied in a combination yet before. But there are number of studies which support the Television as best medium of communication and affecting viewer's behavior. And likewise there are some studies which support the social advertisement as necessary one. Television ads are valuable for generating awareness, knowledge and interest in new products. A direct consequence is that effective television ads may lead viewers to seek out more information about these products and brands (Rubinson 2009). In Developing countries where majority of the population live in remote areas; the effects of television(TV) advertisement are very much high. In these areas TV advertisement enhances the satisfaction level of those products and they prefer to buy that one( Bishnoi,2009). Television advertisements have positive impact on customers, the satisfaction level of consumers increased up to 56% due to television advertisement and even though the companies are spending huge amount on other mediums like radio, magazines , newspapers, yet television has optimistic effect (Ansari and Joloudar,2011).As Computers have grown smaller and more powerful, simultaneous television and internet consumption has increased rapidly (Lin, Vekataraman and Jap 2013). Meanwhile, television usage has not fallen, with Americans still watching about five hours per day (Nielsen, 2010). Similarly advertisements with social dimensions have been among the most controversial of marketing approaches. They have been heralded as marketing's greatest contribution to society (smith 1994; Smith and Alcorn 1991) and lambasted as marketing's most unabashed exploitation (Garfield 1993, 1994). Now social advertising has become a fashion and the leading brands are trying to build images of their brand using these kinds of advertisements. The top brands are concentrating more on these forms of advertisements since it is associated with huge human values. Humans in all cultures at all times form complex social networks; the term social network here means ongoing relations among people that matter to those engaged in the group, either for specific reasons (like fantasy football, cancer support groups, task forces at work) or for more general expressions of mutual solidarity (like families, clans, friends, social clubs). Membership in these networks can be relatively permanent (extended families, which endure for lifetimes) or flexible (pregnancy support groups, in which members rotate out after a few months) (Sivanath Shanmugavel-2011). Public sector marketing thus refers to any marketing activity undertaken by organizations in the public sector, including the provision of services and social marketing (Fox and Kotler). Social Marketing can be considered as a type of public sector marketing , when used by public organizations to promote particular social objectives(Buurma,2011).

## **II. KEY QUESTIONS TO BE DISCUSSED**

The aim of this paper is to answer the following questions and presenting systematic a discussion on those:

- a. Why television is most effective way of communication even today? What are the distinct features of television which makes it most preferred for social advertisements?
- b. How television could help in channelizing the economic change through social advertisements?
- c. Whether the Indian Government is utilizing the television as a source of spreading social And welfare based advertisements?

The research in the paper is presented in the form of research essay and therefore the answers to the above mentioned questions will be presented in the form of linking paragraphs.

### **III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

**3.1. Social Advertisements on television:** It is believed that Television Advertising is more effective in increasing consumer responsiveness and, as a result, could affect national economic performance. Now the questions arise what is consumer responsiveness as far as the social advertisements are concerned?, and what will be the economic performance of social advertisements. Responsiveness here is basically the persuasiveness and resulting change in behavior desired by social advertisement. And similarly if we talk about the economic performance it would be visible in form of Healthy Labor force, better international image – no negative talks about the hygiene and safety of the country, better standards of livings and more awareness regarding the purchase decisions etc. There was resistance to the extension of advertising to social causes in the early 1970s but now this type of advertising has gained popularity. Government interventions may be instituted primarily as Industrial incentives (e.g., export credit guarantees),

Social purposes (e.g., minimum wages, pre-school education),

Legal control (e.g., financial services legislation),

Other purposes such as health and safety (e.g., tobacco controls).

**3.2. Sustainability of Television as a medium of advertising communication in modern era:** With the drastic and speedy changes in the areas of Information technology, our attention is gradually turning away from the traditional advertising domains of TV and print. This change is visible and generally tested through the changes in the way the consumers or viewers are exposed to new information. From the printing press, to radio, to television, and most recently, the internet, each successive innovation has witnessed many changes. Is it means that TV advertisements have grown older? Should these be replaced by other mediums of advertisements? The answer to this question is “NO”, as even after such technological advancements, Investment in TV continues to grow. To support this rejection some points are listed below supported by the market surveys or research supporting TV advertisement still at top -

1. According to Television Bureau of Advertising and Knowledge Networks Inc. 37% of Viewers make decisions after watching the television Advertisements with comparison to other which accounts for hardly 7%

2. According to research by the marketing analytics firm MarketShare (2015), TV remains the most efficient vehicle through which to drive consumer purchases, out-delivering digital media (display and social), print and radio. Automotive and telecom particularly favor TV: at similar spending levels, both categories enjoy a six-fold sales lift on TV versus online.

3. The report (2016) from the Advertising Association and Warc believes that the TV advertisements may rise by 6.9% in coming days.

If we read out Television advertisement in the words John O' Toole, the President of American Association of Advertising Agencies, he has described advertisement in a new way. According to him, advertisement is not related to studies, but educates. It is not a journalist but gives all information. And it is not an entertaining device but entertains everyone. That's why this can be said that television continues to be the biggest mode of

advertising even today, yet industry and consumer habits shift the changes in the television Industry itself has seen drastic changes. The two changes that can be supposed to be most influencing are:

- The globalization of television industry &
- The expansion of Information and technology, which have completely changed the advertisement industry and has made it a more impressive and interesting.

**3.3. Why Television for social Advertisements in India:** There are number of reasons which justifies the use of TV for Social Advertisements in India ,can be discussed in two ways: One with the size and effectiveness of TV advertisements another is the demographics of India which supports more reliance on Social Advertisements on television rather than the other mediums.

It is believed that **Impact and persuasion** are two factors for a successful TV commercial that arouses viewer interest immediately and remains memorable. Television advertisements demonstrate their influence in a variety of ways as enlisted below:

- Preference of Television as a medium of Advertisements rather than print media, Outdoor, Radio, Direct mail, Internet advertisements etc is higher among the respondents as it is more effective via the both of the routes of persuasion central or peripheral.
- Emotional Content in Advertisement is best felt through visual display or motion Advertisements as it is comparatively less effective in print ads and Outdoor ads in form of Billboards etc.
- People felt irritated with Internet based advertising popping up; even they have a general tendency to click cross sign on the extreme right of the advertisement popped up.
- Reliability is another major reason discovered, people generally believe that the reliability in case of TV ads is higher than the other ads on the social network sites like facebook, People recalled the advertisements of the social sites and online shopping to be doubtful. They trust the advertisement on television most as it is reliable.
- Personal wellbeing makes viewers watch these ads with more interest. People in their opinion watch the TV advertisements along with the favorite TV series when they found them informative and related with their own wellbeing.
- Fear Content used in advertisements is only acceptable when the advertisements are related with social objectives. Fear is generally used to restrain the public from any harmful activity or behavior.
- TV has long term effect on the mind of viewer thus the impression of social message telecasted on television will last longer.

The Indian TV advertisement industry has a share of 40% of the total advertisement market share and expected to grow at the rate of 16.8 % in the year 2017 (As per survey conducted by Indian Mirror). Social change in the country is a need of hour and therefore the selection of an effective medium for advertisement is necessary. The Television among the other mediums of advertisement is the only one which has its presence at mass level, though the country is facing "Internet revolution", yet the internet users can not equate the Television users. Even the television is having its extra edge over the other mediums of advertisements in India because most of its population is still illiterate and Television is most impressive in this parlance. All the supporting ideas discussed earlier are directing towards the use of television for social advertisement as this is most effective means of communication.

### **3.4. Social Advertising in India and role of Government:**

The concept of social advertisement is a part of Social marketing where the aim of the government is to bring the desired social change. *Weibe* in year 1952 raised a very interesting question- "Why can't you sell brotherhood like you sell soaps?" This question gave the advertisement a new dimension that was – Social Advertisement. The use of social advertisement was once limited to the government and the NGOs but due to the increasing importance of the concept Social welfare, even the commercial advertisements has also started including the social content in their advertisements. The mandatory CSR has also promoted the social advertisements by the private companies on the same time. But there is an another reason behind the increasing role of the Social Advertisements that is

high degree of persuasiveness , due to the emotional connect in such ads.

Sometimes a degree of fear is also used in such social ads in order to prohibit the people from the hazardous effects of some products and habits.

The difference between the commercial advertisements and the social advertisements can be described on the basis of mainly two points that are- *Price* of commercial advertisement is generally higher than that of social advertisements and *Measurability* where the impact of commercial advertisement can be studied by noting down the change in the sales after the release of the specific advertisement but the social advertisements target at motivation not sales which is difficult to study.

**3.5.1. Themes of social advertisements-** Social advertising is focused on of topics such as health, environmental problems, over human rights, ending with social engagement along with the topics like Gender equality, human rights, children's rights, health effects of smoking, alcohol consumption or drug use, obesity as a disease problem and unhealthy lifestyle, sexually transmitted diseases and prevention options, cancer, psychological disorders, mental or physical disability, blood donation, animal cruelty, domestic violence, political violence and terror, ethics, democracy, xenophobia (dislike of people from other countries) , racism, charity, waste recycling, environmental pollution, the destruction of rainforests, species extinction, importance of education, road safety.

#### **3.5.2. Social advertisement In India:**

After analyzing the social advertising available and popular in India I classified the Social Advertisements in India into 5 categories enlisted below:

*First*, Public and Family Welfar

*Second*, Energy Conservation

*Third*, Business, Agriculture and Consumer support

*Fourth*, Development of good Social Culture

*Fifth*, Health

#### **3.5.3. Welfare Role of social advertising in India**

Advertisements are made out of the social contexts for the social contexts. Various social changes are brought about or helped by advertising. Adult education, family planning and pulse polio campaign are the examples of successful social advertising campaign in India . It makes role models who can create societal change. For example Vidiya Balan is a face for prohibiting the use of open defecation among the women and Shilpa shetty

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has become a known face for garbage management. Social Advertising are efficient source of information , awareness and welfare services provided by the Governments.

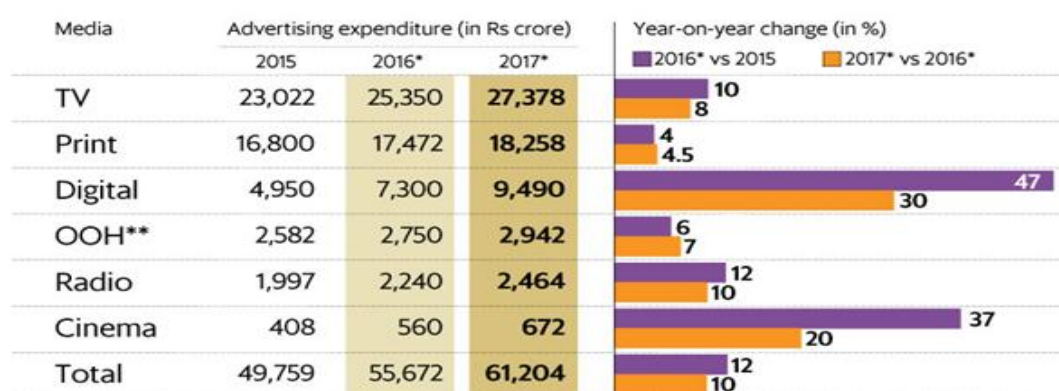
### 3.5.4. Possible negative aspects of social advertising in the India

Sometimes Intrusive, repetitive, unreal, offensive and depressing are some of its unpleasant features. The fear appeal in social advertising creates a feel to avoid watching it in future. Such appeals may create emotional disturbances in some people. Social advertisement campaign moves with repetition from a period of effectiveness to acceptance, to a period of irritation sometimes as people generally feel bored with the same and repetitive advertisements being played in the cinemas before the movie starts.

### 3.5.5. Telecast of Social Advertisements on Indian Televisions

The Advertisements by the Indian Government is displayed on all popular channels But if we talk about the frequency that it is higher in case of DoorDarshan Network and in a week Sunday morning is the high time when the Social Advertisements are displayed on national Television. This Telecast strategy is cost cutting as DoorDarshan is Indian Government's own Channels and even limited as far as TRPs are concerned as National television has lesser TRPs than the Private channels. But one salient feature lies here is that DoorDarshan reaches almost every poor class house in India at nominal costs thus this is the target audience whom behavior is needed to be converted. But if we look into the other areas of Social Advertisements we generally found that Government is spending huge cost on Billboards. Though majority of the spaces of the billboards are reserved with the local governance yet It curtails the income at the same time. One example can be quoted here which is related with the Withdrawn of Subsidy of Gas Cylinder for poor. The new Indian Government advertises it on large level, and its direction of Spending is questionable as different reports and data extracted from RTI reports revealed that the government's spending is more towards Demonetization and Mann ki Baat.

Advertising expenditure in India is expected to grow at 10% to reach Rs 61,204 crores in 2017 over 2016, according to a forecast by WPP-owned media agency GroupM in its report This Year Next Year (TYNY). This is lower than the revised estimates of 12% that GroupM put out for 2016. The ad spending stood at Rs55,671 crore last year. The report, released on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2017, stated that the ad spends in 2017 will pick up from March and April, fuelled by a stable recovery post demonetization. Sectors such as auto, media and e-wallets will contribute to this growth in conjunction with government and political parties increasing their ad spend in view of elections in several states. The below is the list of spending pattern of Indian Government.



\*Forecast \*\*out-of-home advertising, such as billboards

Source: GroupM

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Despite the Fact that television advertisements play vital role the Government's spending is showing a fall in the same in terms of percentage of amount to be spent. The biggest chunk is taken over every year by Print Advertising. The print advertising is limited in its scope moreover it is used for the birth and death anniversary events, published by different Ministries, moreover the Print ad even for the social purpose is less effective and less in terms of reach in comparison to the Television ad . Moreover the social marketing is under the question by the other researchers as well. Such campaigns in social marketing arguable seen as elements of the "permanent Campaign" (Blumenthal,1982; Sparrow and Turner,2001, Palmer,2002), i.e. the methods used to sustain the government in office combined with the efforts used either to convenience the public of the deliverability of public policies (Butler and Collins,1999) or to persuade them to how a particular policy contributes to government's aims (Buurma,2001).

## IV. CONCLUSION

The effective social campaigns are required when India is on the way to development. As in the developing countries educating people is highly required job of any government. As discussed earlier the Television advertisements are most effective therefore the Government should revise its expenditure on Television Advertisements and make sure that these are evenly displayed, made without any political interest. The spending in the other means of communication is also important but being most effective the considerable higher weight age should be given to the Television.

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