

TV Public Service Advertisements: Descriptive Analysis



Alka Bansal
Research Scholar,
Dept. of CAMS,
Punjabi University,
Patiala, Punjab, India



Harjeet Singh
Assistant Professor,
Dept. of CAMS,
Punjabi University,
Patiala, Punjab, India

Abstract

Public Service Advertisements (PSA) is one of the advertisements which do not sell products, but generate ideas for public awareness and development. The idea of PSA has become very popular due to changing scenario and need of the hour. It encourages audience to do something useful. So there is a need to thoroughly examine the concept of PSA and the present study is an attempt in this direction. The study explores the concept of PSA and PSA related to family planning and women problems. The work is mainly based on secondary data sources. The study observed that PSA mainly focuses on issues that impact society on larger scale such as health, education, safety, pollution control, national integration and other social issues. The study also observed that PSA are playing an important role to generate awareness among people related to social issues and problems.

Keywords: Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA), Intrauterine Contraceptive Device (IUCD), Public Service Advertisements, Copper T, Contraceptive Pills.

Introduction

Most of the advertisements which are shown on TV are commercial in nature but with them there are flood of public service advertisements which deal with the problems of public, their health issues and environment problems coming up nowadays. Take the example of *Swatch Bharat Abhiyan* ad run by Government of India. It is most talked about advertisement of the year and its impact is clearly visible around. Similarly, there are many such advertisements like Save girl child, ASHA workers, Family planning ads, Janani Suraksha Yojana and many other public welfare ads run by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. Apart from it, many other government organizations are running advertisements to create public awareness and promote clean and healthy atmosphere for all. There are many other ways like bill boards, posters, announcements at public places being used by government to create public awareness and give information to public. However, television advertisements are most easy and convenient method to convey message to large people at a time. Moreover, it is an interesting medium to reach out to maximum people with its audio-visual features.

Velocity of message being conveyed and heard is good through TV which is the main motive of any campaign. Television is considered to be one of the entertainment as well as information source which is easily available in every household nowadays. Even in the age of internet its importance can't be ignored. Talk of any age group either old or young everyone likes to watch television for entertainment purpose or information gain. Similarly, the advertisements which come up on television get noticed by the audience and do create good impact on the minds of people.

TV advertisements play an important role in creating public awareness with various objectives and themes. Each advertisement has a different theme and way of promoting health awareness from mother protection to child care and from family planning to saving girl child. So, there is a need to analyze the concept of Public Service Advertisements and PSA which deals with family planning and women problems.

Objectives of the Study

1. To explore the concept of Public Services Advertisements (PSA).
2. To especially analyze the Public Services Advertisements related to family planning and women problems.

Research Methodology

Research methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problem. It may be understood as a science of studying how research is done significantly. It includes the steps that are generally

adopted by a researcher in studying the research problem, along with logic behind them. It involves methods and various techniques used by the researcher to carry out the research.

For the present research, advertisements catering to women health are studied especially ads sponsored by NRHM. Descriptive analysis is a method for identifying and interpreting patterns of meaning across qualitative data. It describes the basic idea or meaning of the story or the subject under consideration. It emphasizes pinpointing, examining and recording patterns of meaning or themes within data. Thematic Analysis involves more than simply reporting what is in the data; it involves telling an interpretative story about the data in relation to a research question. The study is mainly based on secondary data and the data has been collected from various books, journals, TV advertisements, magazines etc.

Concept of Public Service Advertisements (PSA): Theoretical Framework

Advertising is all about letting people to know about something new or about some already existing product or service or idea. It is also used as a medium to communicate a message to society. The aim of advertising from commercial point of view is to persuade society to patronize the product, service or idea that a firm is selling. But considering its social purpose, it serves as a bridge between government or non-profit organisation and the common people to give social messages. Public service advertising is one of the means of advertising fulfilling this purpose which do not sell products but ideas for public awareness and development.

Public Service Advertisements (PSAs) also known as Community Service Announcements or Social Service Advertising focuses on issues that impact society on larger scale such as health, education, safety, pollution control, national integration and other social issues and now they have become very popular due to changing scenario and need of the hour. It encourages audience to do something useful.

PSAs goal is not to make profits but to bring a positive change in the society by raising awareness among masses. Aggarwal, VirBala(2001) says that other than product promotion, firms go for institutional advertising, image advertising, public service advertising, public relations advertising. Where promotional advertising was hard sell, public relations advertising was softer.

Public Service Advertisements (PSA) as the name suggest are meant for public interest as opposed to commercial advertisements for products or services advertised to sell. PSAs are intended to modify public attitudes by raising awareness about specific issues. The main objective of Public Service Advertising is to spread social awareness among the masses and promote those social issues which generally go unnoticed. Today, Public Service Advertising has become very popular and is considered to be one of the most effective means to create social awareness and bring about a change or shift in the mindsets of people.

Giri, Sushil in his research proposal 'Impact of Social Advertisement on Indian Society' says that the most common topics of PSAs are health, education and safety. Some of the issues discussed through Public Service Advertising campaigns over the years include –Right To Vote, Use of Condoms, AIDS, Awareness about Going to School, Eve Teasing, Polio Eradication, Save Electricity, Save the Planet for Our Children, National Integration, Family Planning, Respect for National Anthem, Anti-Smoking Campaign, Importance of Blood Donation.

Advertisements play a very important role in life, as indicators of social and economic progress. Social advertising means not promotion or selling of the product like commercial services. It does not result in rupee but it raises awareness about a quality life or a social issue. It talks about the matters of public interest such as social change, political ideas, economic policies, developmental programmes etc. They reveal the direction of change in our values. In fact, a society without advertisements is unthinkable. Advertising has become an important medium of mass education.

Public service advertising campaigns are widespread around the world. Such advertising is generally produced and distributed on cooperative basis by governmental agencies or non-profit organizations. Some PSA use celebrity spokespersons to garner attention as it is a general perception that celebrity advertisements catch the attention of people easily. Other attempt to appeal to the masses is done through portraying risks and issues relevant to ordinary men, women and children.

Eman Sayed Fathy in her presentation says that in most cases, the non-profit organisation provides the programming that is to be advertised, while the participating advertising agency and media companies provide creative services such as media planning and dissemination services on a pro bono (done for public good/ unpaid) basis. Non-profit groups and government agencies commonly team up with private mass media, promotion and advertising firms to produce spots for radio, television and print media. Most commonly, the non-profit agency creates the message and an advertising firm develops the campaign, polishes it to meet industry standards and plans its distribution, all free of charge. Television and radio stations usually broadcast these ads at no charge, and magazines and newspapers customarily publish them for free as well. When it comes to effective Public Service Advertising, it is essential to keep the target audience in mind while creating the social message.

Gaedeke, Ralph M. (1977) states that Social marketing is a much larger idea than social advertising and even social communication. It is the explicit use of marketing skills to help translate present social action efforts into more effectively designed and communicated programs that elicit desired audience response.

PSA Related to Family Planning and Women Problems

There are many PSA which are related to family planning programmes and the problems related to women. These PSA are summarised as follows:

Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA)

The advertisement is set up in village environment with Hindi dialogues and tagline *swasth bharat ki shurat hoti hai swasth parivar se, aap se*. This dialogue aptly covers the idea of overall advertisement which conveys a message of healthy motherhood in order to have a healthy baby which ultimately leads to a healthy nation. Especially in a country like India where so many infants and even mothers die because of lack of proper care at the time of delivery. There can be many reasons for this, depending upon the circumstances of the patient and the area to which she belongs whether she is able to get all the medical facilities on time and if available whether she is able to assess them or not.

To solve this problem Government of India introduced the concept of ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activist) who is a female volunteer selected from common public from every area to make medical facilities available at every doorstep. This is done to fill all gaps between the health care facilities and the general public who are going to avail them. The main focus of the advertisement is to show the importance of Asha workers being appointed by government in every village who bridge the gap between health care system and rural women.

The opening and closing of the advertisement show a close up shot of an ASHA worker who belongs to the village and serve as a health volunteer by creating awareness among village women on health issues. ASHA is the name given to that female of the village who works for the overall health care of the women living in her community. The advertisement clearly shows that a woman can communicate more easily with a woman on personal health issues like pregnancy and child care when she knows her well. It is because women are mostly shy to talk about such issues openly in public or with a male person. Government of India, under National Rural Health Mission introduced the concept of ASHA worker who is chosen from the same village in which she is going to work.

Under National Rural Health Mission scheme, the government introduced the concept of ASHA worker who is chosen from the same village or area in which she is living preferably married or widowed and going to work. Being from same village, she can maintain and have close association with the other village women from day one when they get pregnant till their delivery. Moreover, she will remain easily available in hour of need especially during labor pains or delivery.

The main theme of the advertisement is to show the role and contribution of ASHA workers who are working under the NRHM scheme to motivate women to adopt better methods of family planning and encourage them for hospital delivery instead of home deliveries for a healthy baby and pre- and post-delivery care. It gives a message to every woman who

is expecting a baby to get them enrolled with local hospital and ASHA workers so that they can easily avail all the facilities being provided by government and help in the progress of the nation as it says healthy nation begins with a healthy family.

Hospital Delivery

This advertisement is having child voiceover with a musical opening and background showing a small boy making drawing indicating about the opening of a hospital in their village and availability of a doctor. In continuation to this shot, there is a shot of a small girl who is talking about immunization of her younger sister with the help of ASHA worker to have a healthy and safe childhood for her sister. The advertisement indicates that more and more hospitals are being constructed in villages and availability of the doctor in the village itself so that proper care of the mother and child is ensured on time and there is no chance of any delay in case of any emergency. Towards the end of the advertisement a voiceover gives out a message to get registered with ASHA worker for a healthy motherhood and post-delivery immunization of the child. Again, this advertisement is sponsored by Government of India to promote the idea of hospital delivery and proper immunization of children to protect them against deadly diseases.

Janani Suraksha Yojna (JSY)

This advertisement opens with a night scene of a village house in which there are 3 characters-mother-in-law, her son and daughter-in-law. Daughter-in-law is talking about safe delivery of their child in the hospital with her husband while going for sleep. The condition of the house depicts their poor economic condition and inability to pay delivery expenses. Husband inquires for the expenses of the hospital delivery from her mother who comes into the scene and supports her daughter-in-law's decision for hospital delivery. She also encourages her son to visit hospital and consult ASHA worker for the registration process of her daughter-in-law. The conversation between the three sensitizes the general public that hospital delivery is totally free, comfortable and safe. The ad ends at musical note with happy couple coming out of dispensary with small shots of ASHA worker giving guidance to the couple about safe delivery.

The main focus of the advertisement is to encourage hospital deliveries targeting those families especially which are unable to bear the delivery expenses and avoid hospital delivery thinking that it will cost them heavy on their pockets. Rather to encourage hospital delivery government is providing free pick and drop facility to expecting mothers and even monetary assistance in case of girl child birth to discourage female foeticide. In all, the advertisement promotes mother care during pregnancy which is the main concern of NRHM mission that covers all issues concerning mother care under its scheme Janani Suraksha Yojna.

Choose IUCD and Reap Happiness (IUCD)

Advertisement opens with mother playing in a very happy mood with her child. She is singing song and doing her household chores side by side. As the child sleeps in the arms of the mother, suddenly a fear

grasps her mind that up to what time her happiness is going to stay. She is worried that how she would be able to take care of her child who is still very small if she gets pregnant again with her second child as there is no one else to look after the child. To her relief, comes her husband's reply that they will keep gap between two children with the help of IUCD so that they can take proper care of their first child and her wife's body gets proper time to prepare for second delivery.

The main focus of the advertisement is to tell how to keep gap between children and how with the support of her husband a woman feels secured which is sometimes not given to her by her partner. Synchronization between husband-wife makes decision of family planning easier for women. To create awareness about the methods to maintain this gap in the very next shot, the couple is shown in the doctor's clinic. In this shot, a lady doctor is explaining the implication of Copper-T immediately after the delivery or later to maintain gap either for 5 years or 10 years between the children. IUCD (Intrauterine contraceptive device) also called as Copper-T because of its shape which is placed in the uterus of the woman by a health care expert or doctor to prevent conception or pregnancy from occurring. It is one of the safest family planning methods to avoid pregnancy. The tagline of the advertisement "IUCD chunu khushiyan bunu" aptly covers the essence of the advertisement which promotes family planning.

Family Planning (Contraceptive Pills) (Kite)

The ad promotes family planning program with use of contraceptive pills in a very light manner showing the characters flying kite and having same mindset for family planning. In the advertisement, kite flying has been used symbolically with a small dialogue "aao tum bhi tu door sambalo." This dialogue suggests that just like balancing kite in the air if a family wants to balance their happy married life, they can do that with coordination and cooperation which is must for family planning between husband and wife.

In addition, a midshot of a doctor is shown describing the importance of contraceptive pills and their harmless use for safe family planning. The doctor also suggests that there are no side effects of contraceptive pills and they can be stopped at any point of time when a woman wants to get pregnant. They are easiest method for family planning. The main objective of the advertisement is to clear misconception from the minds of people that contraceptive pills are harmful for health and promote the idea of family planning. These pills are easily available at all health care centres and with ASHA workers too.

Save Girl Child

The advertisement showing declining sex ratio and illegal act of female foeticide through a doctor clinic set up. A female doctor explains the couple who come for sex determination that it is an illegal act and moreover not right for the progress of the nation where already the number of girls as compared to boys is less. The male character supports his decision of abortion by saying that the expenses which are to be spent on the birth of a girl

child and marriage are very high. On which part comes the doctor reply that now a days in every field girl is rising either engineering or medical which were earlier dominated by men only and now they are independent to take their own decisions. They are earning their own livelihood. The conversation between the doctor and the couple changes the mindset of the male character and he decides to change his mind of aborting the girl child and says that he will celebrate the girl child birth. As it is clearly visible the advertisement is about save girl child mission but it is sending out a clear message to the public that not only it is a crime more so it is not right for the nature's balance also.

Maternal Health

The advertisement shows two women sitting together talking to each other regarding safe delivery methods and precautions to be kept in mind while a lady is pregnant. Through a very interesting afternoon gossip, one woman is giving advice to other pregnant woman to eat nutritious food, protein rich diet and timely medication and take iron tablet for a healthy baby. Throughout their conversation they are trying to tell all the possible precautions that a pregnant woman should take. All type of medication and food rich in minerals and proteins they should consume so that they can deliver a healthy baby and keep themselves healthy too. The advertisement is made in such a nice way that it communicates its idea directly to the viewers and people can easily relate to it without any confusion and further discussion.

Family Planning (What's the hurry?)

The advertisement opens with a newly married couple coming out of the room who face the family members asking for good news which means asking to start a family. In response the couple gives the reply "Asi bhi kya jaldi hai" that they are going to understand each other first and they are not in hurry to start a family. The main two characters are trying to convey a message that it's better to start a family after understanding each other because starting a family is a big responsibility. To handle this responsibility both husband and wife need to understand each other first and then only they will be able to take new responsibility. The tagline "pehle samjho ek duje ko phir lao ghar mein teje ko" is well suited to the advertisement and gives out a clear message that decisions regarding family starting should be taken cautiously rather than leaving it on the God sake as mostly people say "Bhagwan ki marji". Because such decisions once taken are going to impact their full life. So, the advertisement suggests first a couple should understand each other and then think of bringing a new member in their life.

No Scalpel Vasectomy (NSV) "I'll handle It"

Advertisement opens with the male character managing all responsibilities from family to business with full care by using tagline "mujh par chod du". When his wife asks him about completing family planning work, he takes that responsibility also on him by going for male sterilization without any hesitation and fear. The main purpose of this advertisement is to communicate that male sterilization is very easy and safe method of family planning. As mostly, males are

reluctant, no surgery and stitches are required for this modern technique.

NRHM (Ladies Talk in Rickshaw)

The advertisement opens with a shot of rope balancing act in a mela on one side and two ladies passing by it in a rickshaw talking to each other. One of the female characters related their life with that shot as they are under constant fear of missing their period every month. At this, the other female character advises her to take contraceptive pills to avoid unwanted pregnancy. To clear her doubt about side effects of contraceptive pills, she gives example of their doctor friend who also takes these pills. On being convinced that these pills are safe to consume, she decides to take pills to avoid any fear of missing periods. The shot ends with male voice over that in India approximately 8 crore women take contraceptive pills and you should also adopt it.

Conclusion

According to the above research, it is very clear that most of the advertisements related to maternal health and child care are run by government of India under the National Rural Health Mission scheme to promote their idea of healthy India begins from healthy family through the tagline "swasth bharaat ki shuraat hoti hai swasth parivaar se, aap se". Government through such advertisements tries to encourage people to go for proper health care system like timely immunization, hospital deliveries, to avail medical facilities provided by government. The main objective of Government is to promote the idea of family planning by educating people about birth control methods to control population of India which is a big issue due to which many problems arise.

Many problems like unemployment, poverty, scarcity of resources will be solved automatically to some extent if not fully, if problem of over population is solved. In country like India, talking about family

planning and methods to control pregnancy openly is still a problem because of low literacy rate. Moreover, people don't take it cautiously because the ultimate sufferer is woman only. She has to bear all the pain and stress of abortions and miscarriage. In this male dominated society women health is not given any importance that's why government is taking all possible initiatives to promote women health and care by launching various schemes and missions so that she can get all basic facilities and rights for her survival. The main reason for such initiative is illiteracy and no awareness among women especially belonging to rural areas or being uneducated regarding health issues. These advertisements inform as well as educate general public about various family planning methods as well as maternal health care initiatives for healthy children and ultimately leading to a healthy nation which is the ultimate objective as well as essence of all these advertisements.

References

- Bhatia, Tej K(2000). Advertising in Rural India, Language, Marketing Communication and Consumerism. Japan: Tokyo Press Co Ltd, pp. 224*
- Dutta, Surjit Kumar and Ghosh(2002) Empowering Rural Women. New Delhi: Akansha Publishing House, pp.7*
- Mathur, U.C. (2002). Advertising Management. New Delhi: New Age International(P)Ltd, pp. 239*
- Niranjna(2002). Status of Women and Family Welfare. New Delhi: Kanishka Publishers, pp. 101-102*

Websites

- National Rural Health Mission www.nrhm.gov.in*
- Ministry of Health and Family Welfare www.mohfw.nic.in/*
- Ministry of Women and Child Development wcd.nic.in*