

RECEPTION OF AUDIO-VISUAL PUBLIC SERVICE ADVERTISEMENTS ON SOCIAL ISSUES: CREATING AWARENESS THROUGH INNOVATIVE CONTENT

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Abstract

Public Service advertisements are considered as one of the most effective ways to raise awareness on the issues of public interest and audio-visual PSA are always given priority across the medium. Audio-visual PSAs are known for their innovative content that aims to bring temporary or permanent changes to the behavior of the target audience. The research study considered three extremely crucial and prevalent issues "Importance of first 1000 days of a child", "Gender Equality" and "Menstrual Health Awareness" and chose multiple audio-visual advertisements under them to discuss their impact on the audience through the data received from the YouTube posts. The results show the inclination towards the acceptance of the content where the content becomes more creative rather than adding a celebrity element.

Keyword: Public service advertisements, audience awareness, importance of first 1000 days of a child, gender equality, menstrual health awareness

1. INTRODUCTION

Advertisements do not encourage a producer to provide information directly, instead, the producer is interested in selling and sharing the information which the buyers wish to inculcate. An advertisement also provides the mechanism to make the process of selling easier for the producer. Sometimes, advertisements can be misleading proving wide differences between the actual product specifications and the portrayal on the commercial leading to dissatisfaction among the consumers (Nelson, 1974). India, with its over a billion residents, making it the second most populated country in the entire world, holds enormous opportunities for

many local and international brands. Mazzarella, a leading anthropology professor from the University of Chicago, segregated the development of Indian advertising into four distinctive phases begins right after the independence in 1947 and lasted until 1960 showed no significant sign of creativity in them, while the second phase lasted nearly for 20 years from 1960 to 1980 demonstrated a little amount of creativity away from the image of the British influences. The third phase focused more on using advertising as an efficient marketing channel instead of blooming on creativity. The fourth and relatively contemporary phase is prone to create differences with the innovative advertising campaign employing effective marketing strategies and a higher level of creativity (O'Barr, 2008). The huge size of population brings opportunities for advertisers to turn the market scenario and invest in the advertising campaign to target the growing market in India. A large number of Indian middle-class population possesses the capacity to dramatically increase the number of sales that attract marketers all over the globe to venture into the Indian market and opens up the opportunities of high budgeted and innovative campaigns. From the 1990s, the Indian market was invaded by the international brands that cause the rising of mass consumerism at the same time put forward the challenges of "the commodity image" that decide the course of future advertising of India (Mazzarella, 2003).

2. DEFINING PUBLIC SERVICE ADVERTISEMENT:

Public service advertisements have signs that represent both verbal (language) and visual forms. It also refers to the advertising texts and visual content that indicates an icon with certain functions. Advertising, besides acting as a marketing activity, could also be used as a communication activity. There are two frequent types of

advertisements found in the market, one being commercial advertising and another is non-commercial advertising or usually known as public service advertising (PSA). While the presentation of the image and concept differ massively between commercial and non-commercial advertising, PSAs primarily aims to deliver social messages among the people belonging from particular strata. Mostly the PSAs from governments fall into the social advertisement category and are independent in nature, away from trade, politics, or religious biases. The motto of PSA is to raise awareness while offering possible solutions to raging social problems. The representation in PSAs may not look like the commercial advertisements but they are based on improving the morality of the target audience as well as bringing positive changes into their actions. PSAs are also heavily dependent on using signs and symbols in propagating messages to their maximum impact. The most impressive attribute of PSAs is their thought-provoking nature that compels the audience to consider the message with importance leading to changes in their behavior and attitude (Tinarbuko, 2008).

3. REVOLUTIONARY PUBLIC SERVICE ADVERTISEMENT CAMPAIGNS

An interesting PSA on COVID-19 awareness campaign featured both the Bollywood actors Akshay Kumar and Atul Srivastava as the celebrity counterpart to support the cause. The story featured Akshay Kumar as 'Bablu', who is momentarily stopped by Atul Srivastava and enquired about his venturing outside after the lockdown is lifted. Akshay Kumar replied that he was going to work and, in the beginning, he was afraid however following proper protocol would decrease the chances of spread. The courage in Akshay Kumar also motivated Atul Srivastava to resume working to go back to normalization. The PSA is made with a motto towards the prevention of COVID-19 spread and regaining the societal flow. Akshay Kumar has been associated with multiple PSAs and the ad on Twin Pit toilet technology is one among them. The commercial starts with a man who came to the house of Akshay Kumar and Bhumi Pednekar, who is playing as a married couple living in a rural area. The man got surprised to find so many flowers and fruits were being harvested in the front yard. The couple then explains the benefits of Twin Pit toilet technology that help them in utilizing the biofertilizer

for harvesting. The PSA aims to introduce such technology for rural people which also reduces the level of pollution.

Abuses on older people often get unnoticed hence the awareness is exceptionally necessary. A PSA portrays an elder lady being searched by her daughter-in-law after being a trough search of the entire room. The short commercial also shows that the old lady is constantly defending her daughter-in-law in her actions and which revealed the reason for her search for 10 rupees note that later on found by her grandson from another room, under the sofa. The PSA is another example of addressing vital issues in society. Unlike most of the issues that require our attention and careful consideration, a PSA on building toilets for better health and sanitization featured Kajol Devgan to explain the importance of building toilets or "Izzat Ghar". The ad depicts Kajol as a journalist taking an interview of an exceptional performer from a village and the girl replied that she could perform well in the entrance examination because of her good health condition. Then she thanked her father for building toilet in for their family. The commercial ended as the Bollywood actress Kajol Devgan advises people to follow the example and build toilets for a healthier environment. When Kajol Devgan played the part of a journalist, her husband Ajay Devgan also played a government officer who is inspecting the villages on their cleanliness. The PSA on "Swachh Survekshan Grameen" aims to aware people to not only keep their household clean but their surroundings as well.

4. IMPACT OF PSA ON SOCIETY

The goal of Public Service Advertisement is to formulate proper and suitable strategies for social issues and causes. To achieve such goals, we need to develop an understanding of how media can be used in the most appropriate ways to gain public interest in advertisements addressing social issues. Public Service Advertisements can impact society in various ways, however, their impact on the society and the individual are sometimes in debate but in most cases are aimed to bring positive changes. A majority of PSAs are targeted towards rural audiences to spread knowledge and awareness among society. The Public Service Advertisements help immensely by spreading awareness, reaching out for help and prevention of

spreading the contagious virus during pandemics like the Swine flu which affected and killed a lot of people in India. The Public Service Advertisements can also help in informing about what seems to be more casual and mundane things. For example, Smoking was thought to be a safe and healthy practice at point, and there wasn't enough stigma around it even when discovered to be harmful, so the Public Service Advertisements were used to make people aware of the possible danger of being a smoker or even being a passive smoker (Krishna Pal Singh, 2017).

The Public Service Advertisements often spread other forms of social awareness like taking care of the elderly, not bullying others who are different, women education and gender equality, etc. The PSAs can sometimes be manipulative by private organizations where they use the commercials to market or sell their good or services. The validity of PSA is still a subject to question, most Indian public service advertisement is either Survey based or experimental. In India, the subject of Public Service Advertisement couldn't draw much attention from the researchers and the history of Public Service Advertisement in India is often misrepresented and is perceived in different ways creating the gap in the available research of the domain (O'Barr W. M., 2012).

5.AUDIO-VISUAL PUBLIC SERVICE ADVERTISEMENTS ON SOCIAL ISSUES IN INDIA

A PSA is basically a short informational clip that is basically made to raise awareness of people about important issues. The aim of these PSAs is to eliminate misconceptions among the target group through an audio-visual presentation. There are various ways the PSAs are made but their main goal is to get the message across to the people in the most effective and efficient way. The possible techniques include animated clips, dramatizations, audio content etc. This gets the audience to pay attention to the message which should be clear and easy to understand. Since the information is supported by facts and data about the issues, the audience can sympathize and take action while moving towards a positive change. PSAs have been used as an instrument to make people aware of their duties and responsibilities across the nation. As India is such a big country it is hard to spread all the information as poverty and illiteracy is one of the biggest hurdles that we face even now. PSAs constantly work on awareness

generation by launching multiple campaigns, such as Female foeticide, identification of the sex of the foetus abortion of girl child etc. Increasing awareness of the problem has led to multiple campaigns by celebrities and journalists to prevent such activities. Aamir Khan has devoted the first episode "Daughters Are Precious" of his show Satyamev Jayate to raise awareness of this widespread practice, focusing primarily on Western Rajasthan, which is known to be one of the areas where this practice is common. Its sex ratio dropped to 883 girls per 1,000 boys in 2011 from 901 girls to 1000 boys in 2001 (O'Barr W. M., 2008).

The Indian government has passed the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act (PCPNDT) in 1994 to ban and punish prenatal sex screening and female foeticide. There are PSAs dedicated to encourage the construction and use of public toilets to encourage hygiene living in rural areas like campaigns by the government's Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. Some other popularly known social issues are also being cleared up such as AIDS Awareness - where people believed that Aids spread through touch. PSA advertisement featuring Shabana Azmi was aired to create awareness. The advertisement has a theme —AIDS 'chhoone se nahin phailti'. PSAs for Anti-smoking were also introduced to make the common public aware of how harmful it is for humans to smoke, not only does it kill the smoker slowly by damaging their lungs but also becomes harmful for other people who are inhaling the smoker. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, (MOHFW), Government of India, launched several national tobacco control campaigns on mass media to warn people about the deadly effects on active and passive smoking. It is known to be especially dangerous for pregnant women causing miscarriage and disability to the unborn child. Such Campaigns from the government make sure to increase awareness on the issues among the mass (Krishna Pal Singh, 2017).

6.OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The research has been conducted to analyze the appropriate existing literature supporting the existence of audio-visual public service advertisements. The study also took three distinctive areas of concern "importance of first 1000 days of a child", "gender equality" and "menstrual health awareness" that is been covered by a number of PSAs to analyze popular campaigns under

them. The overall aim of the study is to bring in a few public service advertisements made on extremely relevant issues to understand the importance of PSAs for their innovative content.

7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: (SAYAK PAL)

The study strictly follows the qualitative method to analyze the content of the selected public service advertisements. The study considered three crucial and essential areas that PSAs are actively working and also selected three popular audio-visual campaigns for analysis. Each one of the advertisements was also accompanied by the details of the audio-visual evidence on YouTube to make it easier to understand their reach and impact on the viewers.

8. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Theme: Importance of first 1000 days of a child

Since the future of the nation and to some extent, the world is heavily dependent on future generations, it is one of the primordial responsibilities of the current generation to provide a favorable environment to them right from the beginning of their precious lives. The first 100 days of a new-born are extremely important for their brain development and also fasten their physical growth. Lack of awareness in the domain can cause serious damages and might leave lifelong impressions on their psychological and physical arena. Reviewing the following three PSAs on "Importance of first 1000 days of a child" will help understand the nature of such initiative in detail.

Campaign	Importance of first 1000 days of a Child
Medium:	Television, Social Media
Language:	Hindi
#tag:	No
No. of Views:	1.2 Million
No. of Likes:	23 Thousand
No. of Dislikes:	308
No. of Comment:	370
Celebrity involvement:	Yes (Amrita Rao)
Ad duration:	04.46 Minutes

Table 1: PSA on Importance of first 1000 days of a child, YouTube, September 20, 2021

The plot of the PSA focuses on a typical village family where the importance of the first 1000 days of a child is yet to be projected. The 4:46 minutes advertisement circles around a new-born and her encounter with her family. The stressful and busy life of the mother, father and grandparents of the baby compelled her to spend time alone in the crib while being deprived of the much-needed attention. The aunt (bua) observed the entire phenomenon and decides to make the family aware of the situation through a story of a princess who yearns for attention from her busy parents and looks out to spend quality time with them. The aunt played by Amrita Rao then addresses the family on the importance of the first 1000 days of a child. The actress

also shared information on the "national child health program", "The Mother and Child Protection Card (MCP card)" while sharing the availability (like angan wadis and call centers) and usage of them, so that the parents and other family members can make good use of them.

Apart from the central idea of the PSA, the ad also touched upon the little subordinates but equally important issues like "washing the hands before touching the infant", "keeping the cell phone away from the infant" etc.

Campaign	Nutrition in the first 1000 days of child
Medium:	Television, Social media
Language:	Hindi with English subtitles
#tag:	None
No. of Views:	104 Thousand
No. of Likes:	1.8 Thousand
No. of Dislikes:	36
No. of Comment:	17
Celebrity involvement:	None
Ad duration:	12.60 Minutes

Table 2: PSA on Nutrition in the first 1000 days of child, YouTube, September 20, 2021

In this PSA, the story revolves around a little girl named Guriya and her family along with friends celebrating her second birthday. Her family has invited the whole village to celebrate her birthday. Then family also sang the song about the importance of maintaining the health of a child in the first thousand days. Then another family comes to celebrate Guriya's birthday named Shakshi who is the daughter-in-law in their family and is pregnant with a child. She had a miscarriage due to lack of nutrition and lack of childcare education. Then the narrator teaches her and her family about the importance of 1000 days till the 2nd birthday of the child and also suggests she get herself registered at the ANM Clinic. It is also important to be cautious until the child

is born and the mother should at least do 4 tests for BP, blood, urine and weight this can help to identify and cure any health issues in advance. Then, Guriya's father advises Sakshi's husband to take care of Sakshi with his family. The narrator also teaches the audience about how to feed the child in different months duration. Therefore, both the families sat before the narrator to gain more information and the importance of 1000 days. The whole family also agreed about the whole thing and accepts to take better care of Sakshi and her child. Afterward, the village celebrates the cake cutting ceremony of Guriya. The PSA with a duration of 12.6 minutes is dedicated to increasing the awareness among the people on the importance of the first 1000 days for a child.

Campaign	Importance of first 1000 days
Medium:	Television, Social media
Language:	Hindi
#tag:	None
No. of Views:	2.7 Thousand
No. of Likes:	60
No. of Dislikes:	4
No. of Comment:	3
Celebrity involvement:	None
Ad duration:	12.23 Minutes

Table 3: PSA on Importance of first 1000 days, YouTube, September 20, 2021

The PSA narrates the narrator tells the importance of first 1000 days of child and it's the appropriate procedure. At the starting of the ad, the narrator asks a

question to the audience that how to take care of a child in its first 1000 days and how to take care of the

mother and the child after pregnancy. The narrator tells that's the first 1000 days of a child is the key to physical and mental development. The commercial also provides guidelines on the first stage of 1000 days which is the pregnancy stage consisting of 270 days. T in this stage we have to take special care of the mother and child and take the mother to the clinic this stage requires necessary tests that help in finding out if there are any health issues are there or not. In the clinics, they also inform the mother about the nutrients to take and also give necessary details. Thereafter the narrator meets two ladies named Saloni and Sita and asked about their children while advising them how they take care of their child in the first 1000 days. The PSA also tells about the second stage which consists of 180 days, starting from the birth of the child till 6 months of age. In this stage, the mother has to provide her child only with breast milk. Then the last stage consists of 550 days, starting from the age of 6 months till the completion of its 2

years. In this stage, the mother has to start giving her child mixed vegetables and etc. The PSA is extremely essential as, throughout the duration of 12.23 minutes, it provides crucial and essential information on the first 1000 days of children's development.

Theme: Gender equality

Gender equality has always been a major issue and needs to be tackled with utter importance as well as with sensitivity. Many a time, inequality affects the lives of people negatively across India, from not being able to get certain job opportunities to even being treated differently as a child. Girls are told to learn household chores from a young age to help their mothers at home and later their in-laws, they are not allowed to work late and stay outside as it looks bad upon their image. Boys are told from a young age that they are not supposed to cry "like a girl" and always be strong while hiding their true emotions. And it even extends to illogical actions such as the choice of colors, for example, only girls can wear pink and only boys can wear blue. It affects the mentality of people from a very young age in negative ways. Reviewing the following three PSAs on "Raising awareness towards Gender Equality" will help understand the nature of such initiative in detail.

Campaign	Let's raise a generation of equals!
Medium:	Television and social media
Language:	Hindi and English (With English subtitles)
#tag:	#GenerationEqual #GenE
No. of Views:	33.7 Million
No. of Likes:	7.5 Thousand
No. of Dislikes:	150
No. of Comment:	310
Celebrity involvement:	0
Ad duration:	02.00 Minutes

Table 4: PSA on Let's raise a generation of equals, YouTube, October 16, 2021

The commercial focuses on both the sides of male and female, showing the negative sides that "boys don't play with dolls" or "don't cry like a girl" as they are considered as feminine actions. On the other side, "girls don't play with cars" as this has been identified with masculinity. The PSA then shifted on showing the independence of choice that lies with both genders, where a girl can

choose to play with cars and a boy can take ballet lessons. Both of them can take part in doing household chores or play together with the same game and lose to each other. The PSA urges the parents and society not to discriminate based on gender subsidizing the preferences of the children.

Campaign	Are we teaching our sons what we have been teaching our daughters?
Medium:	Television and social media
Language:	Hindi (With English subtitles)
#tag:	#ShareTheLoad #GenderEquality
No. of Views:	9 Million
No. of Likes:	6.1 Thousand
No. of Dislikes:	466
No. of Comment:	478
Celebrity involvement:	0
Ad duration:	02.37 Minutes

Table 5: PSA on Are we teaching our sons what we have been teaching our daughters, YouTube, October 16, 2021

The PSA starts with a mother on a call with her daughter while she is serving food to her son in his room which was quite messy. The mother got shocked to hear that her daughter has decided to quit her job as she needs to take care of the household chores. Her mother then suggests that she should ask her husband's help on which the daughter replies that her husband doesn't know how to do the household chores. The mother got angry on hearing the reply from her daughter and then suddenly realized the possibility when she looked at her son's room. The mother understands the root cause and decided to take the action right from that moment. She guided her son to learn to wash his clothes to avoid such circumstances arising in the future where another girl might need to leave her job in order to support her family in doing household chores. The campaign with hashtag sharetheload aims to raise awareness among the people on equal division of work.

Campaign	Tata Tea Let's practice Gender Sensitivity at Home
Medium:	Television and social media
Language:	Hindi
#tag:	#JaagoRe
No. of Views:	46,3 Thousand
No. of Likes:	621
No. of Dislikes:	29
No. of Comment:	54
Celebrity involvement:	0
Ad duration:	00.56 Minutes

Table 6: PSA on Tata tea let's practice gender sensitivity at home, YouTube, October 16, 2021

In this video we see a common problem that occurs in almost every family, the mother tells her daughter to stay at home and help her do chores instead of playing with her brother. Meanwhile, she is letting her son go out to play instead of teaching him the same. She also insists the father go out and play with the son. The daughter asks again if she can go out and play with her brother to which the mother firmly declines and says that she should learn household chores otherwise the

society will taunt her with "mother taught you nothing". The commercial strongly identifies the social stigma that we often follow and end up creating differences between our own children based on their gender. Theme: Menstrual health awareness
Discrimination against menstruating women is widespread in India, where periods have long been taboo and considered impure. Women during the menstruation cycle are often excluded from social and

religious events, denied entry into temples and shrines, and even kept out of kitchens. While Menstruation is one of the most common and absolutely natural and harmless biological processes which is also a mark of femininity and fertility. Proper awareness about the process needs to be communicated properly not only

among the women but also among the men in the society to eliminate further misunderstanding and avoidance. Reviewing the following three PSAs on "Menstrual health awareness" will help understand the nature of such initiatives in detail.

Campaign	Periods are #BloodyNatural Let's end period shame
Medium:	Television and social media
Language:	English
#tag:	#BloodyNatural
No. of Views:	9.3 Million
No. of Likes:	73 Thousand
No. of Dislikes:	882
No. of Comment:	2,534
Celebrity involvement:	Shraddha Kapoor
Ad duration:	01.00 Minutes

Table 7: PSA on Periods are #BloodyNatural Let's end period shame, YouTube, November 01, 2021

This PSA starts with the narrator setting up a scenario that it's the first day of getting periods in a month. It shows different females having to face different situations where other people pass negative comments on their period. The commercial presents different circumstances like a male instructor is instructing a girl practitioner against her period or a mother is asking her daughter not to bother her father on these. The

Bollywood celebrity Shraddha Kapoor then talks strongly against this attitude and asks people to call the process with the name. Then the One-minute PSA switches to showing those same scenarios but from another perspective where people are reacting positively to the circumstances. The PSA aims to increase menstrual awareness among people to eliminate the taboos associated with it.

Campaign	No shame in Menstruation
Medium:	Television and social media
Language:	Hindi
#tag:	#noshame
No. of Views:	93 Thousand
No. of Likes:	598
No. of Dislikes:	39
No. of Comment:	26
Celebrity involvement:	No
Ad duration:	03.23 Minutes

Table 8: PSA on No shame in menstruation, YouTube, November 01, 2021

This 3 minutes 23 Seconds PSA is narrated by a child, explaining the everyday struggles of women in India who are unaware of menstrual hygiene and suffer silently under the weight of society's hypocritical and

backward mentality of Period Shame. It shows the flaws in our society, homes, schools, and surrounding, which lack awareness of menstrual hygiene. The PSA is illustrated through an animation video highlighting the

struggles of women in India. It is narrated in Hindi instead of English to reach a larger audience. The PSA is constructed as a way to reach primarily the rural areas

of the nation while increasing the awareness among the people on menstrual hygiene

Campaign	It's Just A Period Daughter's Day
Medium:	Television and social media
Language:	English and Hindi
#tag:	#DaughtersDay #ItsJustAPeriod #DadsAndDaughtersDay
No. of Views:	7.1 Million
No. of Likes:	12 Thousand
No. of Dislikes:	146
No. of Comment:	No
Celebrity involvement:	No
Ad duration:	03.16 Minutes

Table 9: PSA on it's just a period daughter's day, YouTube, November 01, 2021

The PSA is based on a very unique and unusual issue where the father is given the responsibility to share information on the period who are about to enter into that age. The PSA follows a format of an interview between the daughter and father where both of them have to read a script that revolves around explaining the concept of period. The content and theme of the interview have been kept hidden from them until they read to that part. The commercial shows an exceptional impact where the fathers were finally overcome from their hesitation and started explaining the concept to their daughters. The PSA aims to convince people to get over their mind blockage and prejudices on period and accept as well as share the proper information.

revolutionary public service advertising campaigns those are been created and circulated in recent years. The Impact of PSAs are also been discussed in the literature review section while the content analysis of the nine selected PSAs establishes the creativity in message creation as well as dissemination of information among the people. Data retrieved from the audio-visual post of the advertisements on YouTube also shows the audience's affinity towards the creative content, rather than other elements like celebrity enforcement, picturization, etc. establishing the preferential arena of the audience for PSAs.

9.CONCLUSION

Public service advertisements have always been a crucial instrument in bringing in changes in the attitude and behavior of the target audience. There are a large number of issues that are covered by a number of PSAs on different mediums, among them audio-visual PSAs are considered more popular and with maximum impact. This study has taken three very crucial and prevalent issues namely "Importance of first 1000 days of a Child", "Gender Equality" and "Menstrual Health Awareness" and three most popular PSAs those are been uploaded on YouTube to conduct the content analysis. The existing literature proves the importance of PSA over the decades while also discussing a few

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